

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

I. THE OFFERINGS – Leviticus 1-7

A. With Wholehearted Devotion: Burnt Offerings – 1:1-17; see also 6:8-13

Leviticus 1:1-2, *“And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.”*

The Book of Leviticus begins with a general guideline on offerings. Leviticus is a sequel to Exodus. Exodus ends with the construction, dedication and acceptance of the Tabernacle. Leviticus explains the sacrifices that were allowed to be offered and the manner in which they were to be offered in the Tabernacle. The first thing to note is that it was initiated by the LORD. It was given expressly to Moses, to be given to Aaron and the priests, and to be taught to the people. The ultimate recipient of the offerings is the LORD, not man. The three parties involved were: the LORD, priests and the worshipper.

The offering must come from the worshipper’s own “pocket”. In other words, it must cost the worshipper something. He was not to steal or to bring something that did not cost him. It was not to be a wild animal as the word “cattle” is the Hebrew “behamah” which refers to a domestic animal. The Hebrew for wild animal is “chayyah”. Therefore it points to ownership and sacrifice. As David said in **2 Samuel 24:24**, *“And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.”* Game animals may be eaten if correctly slaughtered (Deu 14:5) but not offered for sacrifice as it would not cost the worshipper anything. Perfect animals that are without blemish and healthy were to be offered to the LORD; anything less was unacceptable. Malachi made that very clear in **Malachi 1:7, 13**, *“Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. . . . Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.”*

Meat was a luxury in OT days, more so if one was a shepherd whose livelihood depended on his cattle. Seldom did they eat meat which was the diet of the rich (2 Sam. 12:1-6 - This was Nathan’s parable against King David after the latter sinned against God with Bathsheba!)

It was from the LORD. It was for the covenant people and all who lived in the Land of the covenant people. There was to be only ONE way of worship in the Land of Promise. The reason is that there is only ONE Jesus Christ.

The LORD gave instructions and the people brought. This was the Word from the LORD. It did not come from the people. The entire Levitical worship system

originated from God and not man. The sophistication found in this method of offering was beyond her time. It was complicated and very tedious. It was to demonstrate the heinous nature of sin. Sinful man cannot just walk up to God arrogantly and without realizing the great price that has to be paid so that his sins can be cleansed and forgiven. The price to be paid is determined by God, not man.

The word “offering” is “*qorban*” (both words in verse 2). This word means “something brought near the altar.” It was “a sacrificial offering.” This word was used to mean a general offering to encompass all the sacrifices that an individual Israelite could offer. This same word was used by the Lord Jesus Christ in **Mark 7:11**, “*But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.*” By the time of Christ, this word had been very badly distorted and abused by the priests and Israelites who wanted to break God’s Law for personal gain. They abused their parents and denied them parental support by saying that their substance was “*qorban*.”

Leviticus lists the offerings to be made by PRIVATE PERSONS. The PUBLIC NATIONAL sacrifices offered each day and at national festivals are listed in Numbers 28 and 29. What we have in Leviticus was a personal act of devotion or atonement. Sacrifices had to be made whenever the Israelites sin or became defiled in one way or another (Leviticus 4-5, 12-15). The sacrifices also included offers of gratitude or devotion to mark special occasions, e.g. the fulfillment of a vow (Num 6:9ff); Aaron’s ordination or consecration to service (Lev 8-9), childbirth (Lev 12). In fact, every meal at which meat was to be eaten had a special significance so much so that the animal had to be presented in the Tabernacle before it could be killed and eaten (Lev 17).

1. **An OX** as a burnt-offering (1:3-9) -- The first of the series of offerings to be explained is the burnt-offering. This was an offering made by the wealthy. The ox was the best and most expensive animal to be offered by an Israelite.

Leviticus 1:3, “*If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.*”

The use of the particle “if” is very common in this Book. This means that the worshipper has many options. It also means that the offering is freewill and must be from the heart. In this chapter, the worshipper has three choices: an ox, a sheep or goat or a bird.

The animal has to be a male and without blemish. The male animal has a higher value than the female and also the worth of the animal is escalated when it is without blemish. A male without blemish is preserved for reproduction purposes. In other words, it must be the very best that is offered to the LORD for the propitiation of his sins.

The worshipper must do it willingly from his heart. It is not ritualistic or mechanical. He cannot go through the motion as if this was all God requires from His people in order to “appease” an angry God.

The worshipper is to bring it to the door of the Tabernacle before the LORD where the altar is located.

Leviticus 1:4-5, *“And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”*

The worshipper, with his heart prepared, stands before the LORD in fear and reverential awe; a life is about to be taken and blood is about to be spilt BECAUSE OF THE WORSHIPPER’S SINS. The worshipper puts his hand on the head of the burnt-offering. The word for “put” is the Hebrew “samak” which means “to lean on.” This is not merely laying the hand gently and lightly touching the animal’s head. The worshipper is to press hard on the animal’s head with his body leaning heavily on it.

There are three possible views on “laying of hands” --

1 Transference of power or honour -- The act of laying on of the hands has the understanding of “transference of power or honour as in the case of Moses laying his hands on Joshua his successor. [NOTE -- **Numbers 27:18-20**, *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.”* Also **Deuteronomy 34:9**, *“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.”*]

2 Separation of sin of blasphemy -- The laying on of hands on a blasphemer could also mean that the sin lies with the blasphemer alone and that the witnesses are true and they have identified him as the blasphemer. Then the blasphemer is stoned to death by the congregation who witnessed the entire incident. [NOTE -- **Leviticus 24:13-14**, *“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.”*]

3. Purely symbolic -- There are others who reject the above two meanings and understand the laying on of hands as merely symbolic. They argue that there is no “transference of authority” but merely an act of identification.

The following are some NT usages of the phrase “laying of hands”:

Acts 8:18, *“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,”* – This was not an impartation or transference of power since the apostles had no inherent power in themselves. The laying on of hands was one of acceptance and acknowledgement that the Samaritans were believers. The authority of the apostles was to sanction the acceptance of Philip's ministry.

1 Timothy 4:14, *“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”* – This was the laying on of hands by the elders or presbyters on Timothy to ordain him for the fulltime ministry. It was one of identification, affirmation and authorization of Timothy's private calling into the fulltime ministry and publicly acknowledged.

Hebrews 6:2, *“Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”* This is considered as one of the lists of basic doctrines that a new believer is supposed to know.

Based upon these occurrences in the Scriptures, the laying on of hands onto the sacrificial animal by the worshipper would have to mean an “identification” that this animal is to die in his place. The offering must be done in faith looking forward to that great one time sacrifice of Christ who will die for the sins of the worshipper.

The worshipper probably first confesses his sin which initiated this act of bringing the burnt-offering sacrifice. He would probably utter a psalm or say a prayer. There are a few psalms that pertain to burnt-offering sacrifices. Some of them include: Psalms, 4, 5, 20 (v 3), 40 (v 6), 50 (v 8), 51 (v 19), 66 (v 15).

The burnt-offering is for the atonement of sins. Hence the whole sacrifice, except for the skin which the priests are allowed to keep for their own use. [**Leviticus 7:8**, *“And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered.”*]

The “he” in verse 5 refers to the worshipper (singular) and not the priests (plural). The closest antecedent is the worshipper. The worshipper himself has to kill (slaughter, i.e. “to slit the throat”) the burnt-offering as a sign of the great ignominy of his sin. There is no escaping the ox's cries as its throat is about to be slit; the blood of the animal covering his hand as he slits the throat; and the struggles of the dying animal as its blood is collected by the priests and drained. The public nature of the death of this animal for the worshipper's sins is a vivid picture of the costly price that has to be paid for the remission of sin. This was done before the LORD.

The priests (more than one as the ox is large) will take the blood and sprinkle it round about the altar. The blood has to be poured and visibly soaked into the ground. The worshipper will see all these happening before his eyes. He will be visibly moved by this . . . one moment the “perfect” ox is well and alive and the next moment it is lying dead with its blood being poured out because of the sins of the worshipper.

Leviticus 1:6, “*And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces.*” The worshipper will then flay, i.e. skin the ox and cut it into pieces. The last two acts will further deepen the atoning work done on the worshipper’s behalf. Skinning the ox will take effort and cutting it into pieces will not only aid in burning it when placed onto the altar but will also demonstrate to the worshipper the extent of his sins. The once very much alive and perfect animal has been reduced to pieces of small meat and is deader than a doorknob. The skin will be given to the priests for their use. Perhaps the reason for the removal of the skin was for practical reasons in that it will facilitate ease of burning.

“The animal was innocent and without sin and perfect; and yet it died by the hand of the worshipper because of his sin,” is the intended message from the burnt-offering.

Leviticus 1:7-9, “*And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.*”

Then the priests shall take over. The parts of the ox will be placed carefully onto the altar to be burnt. It will be thoroughly consumed and be turned into ashes. The totality of the consummation from a living animal into a pile of ashes must have been mind boggling! All these took place because of the sins of the worshipper!

Only the priests whom God had appointed could be the mediators between the worshipper and God. They took over the role of the firstborn sons.

This was not all, for the inwards and legs must be washed in water. Who does the washing? The “he” here has to refer to the worshipper (singular) and not the priests (plural). What is the significance of the washing of the inwards (bowels or purtenance, i.e. the intestines and insides of the animals) and the legs? The insides often refer to the “real” person or his soul! The inwards are washed clean of the excreta before they are placed on the altar for burning. The worshipper’s motives and his heart are inside him. Thus the legs represent his legs that have gone to places that often led him to sin. When these are washed by the worshipper himself, he will immediately be directed to his own soul and heart which gave rise to his motives and the places which led to his sins.

When these are washed, it symbolizes the cleansing of the worshipper's sin and that he ought to sin no more!

The washed legs will be given to the priests to be burned completely. The word "burn" has the meaning "to turn into smoke." It means to "turn into fragrance by fire." The smoke will ascend upwards and the worshipper will see it billowing up toward heaven!

The outcome was a sweet savour done unto the LORD. This means that God accepted the atoning work done by the worshipper for the remission of his sins!

2. A SHEEP or GOAT as a burnt-offering (1:10-13) –

In the event that the Israelite cannot afford to bring an ox, then the next acceptable animal is the sheep or the goat.

Leviticus 1:10-13, *"And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar. And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD."*

The steps for offering these animals is more or less the same as for the ox, except for the flaying and the sprinkling of blood northward instead of all round the altar.

It is assumed that the laying on of the hands upon the sheep or the goat is similar due to the significance of complete identification with the burnt-offering. This need not be repeated here.

The sprinkling of the blood northward means that it is sprinkled onto the right side of the altar if the worshipper is facing the Tabernacle with his back to the entrance which always faces east. The meaning for this difference is hard to determine. Perhaps it is to indicate to the worshipper that this is a sheep or goat offering rather than an ox.

Why were goats allowed to be used? Are they not regarded as "unbelievers" on the Judgement Day of the Lord (Matthew 25:32-33)? This is true. But the context determines the meaning of the words. In Matthew 25 goats refer to unbelievers but it does not mean that they were unclean when used as burnt-offering sacrifices. The goat is a clean animal. When you kill a goat, it will be noisy like the ox but the sheep will be silent.

The significance of the offering of the sheep or goat will be similar to what was explained above for the ox.

3. **A BIRD** as a burnt-offering (1:14-17) --

There is no excuse for not bringing a burnt-offering. The poorer Israelite who could not afford either the sheep or the goat and definitely not the ox will have to bring clean birds.

Leviticus 1:14-17, *“And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the LORD be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons. And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar: And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes: And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.”*

The only two acceptable clean birds were young pigeons or turtledoves. They were cheap and very affordable. Why a young pigeon? Barnes has this explanation, “The limitation of the age of the pigeons may be accounted for by the natural habits of the birds. It would seem that the species which are most likely to have been the sacrificial dove and pigeon are the common turtle and the bluerock pigeon, a bird like our stock-dove, and considerably larger than the turtle. The turtles come in the early part of April, but as the season advances they wholly disappear. The pigeons, on the contrary, do not leave the country; and their nests, with young ones in them, may be easily found at any season of the year. Hence, it would appear that when turtledoves could not be obtained, nestling pigeons were accepted as a substitute.” The seasonal nature of the turtledove might explain the option of a pigeon and a young pigeon at that!

In this instance, the priest will do the killing by taking the head off. It is only ONE bird, either a turtledove or young pigeon. The feathers of the bird will be plucked off by the worshipper and then thrown down in front of the altar (eastward). Then it will be offered as a burnt-offering whole without cutting it into pieces as it is too small.

The identity of the “he” in verses 16 and 17a points to the worshipper rather than the priest as the priest is mentioned again in verse 17b. This separates the action of the worshipper and the mediator. So instead of washing the inwards and legs of the larger animal sacrifice, the worshipper now plucks the feathers of the bird and then cleaves the bird. The word “cleave” means to “tear or cut open”. The bird will be cut open so that the entrails will be exposed but he is not to tear the bird into two separate parts. Then the bird is given to the priest to be burned whole upon the altar.

USAGE OF BURNT-OFFERING IN THE BIBLE – It is different from sin-offering which is for purification purposes.

1 – Atoning value not disputed – Lev 14:20 and 16:24 point to this usage.

2 – Propitiate God’s wrath – In Genesis 8:21, when the Flood subsided, Noah offered a burnt-offering after he came out of the ark. God’s attitude toward sinful man was reversed. Instead of punishment, He gave a promise of blessing. **Genesis 8:20-22**, “*And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*” [Emphasis added] The sinful heart of man remained the same. The burnt-offering did not change the sinful heart of man, neither did it remove the sinfulness from man. What it did was to make fellowship with God possible for sinful man. The burnt-offering appeased God’s anger toward sinful man.

3 – Offered for Unintentional sin – The sin of ignorance also required a burnt-offering sacrifice (Num 15:24.) This is for atonement of sin.

4 – It can stay the anger of God toward sinners – David took a census against the will of God and was punished for it. It was necessary for him to offer a burnt-offering as quickly as possible for the LORD to stop the death of the Israelites. **2 Samuel 24:24-25**, “*And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.*” Also in **1 Chronicles 21:26-27**, “*And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.*” See also 2 Chron 29:7-8.

5 – Offered as an act of obedience – In Genesis 22, the LORD commanded Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt-offering to Him. This burnt-offering bore testimony of Abraham’s faith and absolute devotion to the LORD his God. Likewise, Jethro having acknowledged the greatness of God over all gods, offered burnt-offering and sacrifices to the LORD (see Exo 18:11-12). Similarly, Moses offered burnt-offering and peace-offerings after Israel accepted the terms of the Sinai Covenant (Exo 24:3-8).

6 – Offered as a Thanksgiving offering -- The intent behind offering purification-offering and burnt-offering after childbirth, healing or bodily pollution is not out of place (see Lev 12:6; 14:13, 19, etc.; 15:15, 30). The worshipper was thankful to God for what has happened in his life. “However if it is right to regard the sin offering as a means of purifying the sanctuary from the pollution of sin, it could well be that the burnt offering is intended to free the worshipper from the consequences of sin, to

protect him from God's wrath."¹ We may find it strange that childbirth and diseases required burnt-offering but that is the standard of holiness required by the Holy God. This is the main theme of Leviticus: The difference between a Holy God and sinful man. Only the pure were fit to stand before God.

UNDERSTANDING OF ATONEMENT – The BURNT-offering is for the atonement of our sins. The word for atonement in Hebrew is “caphar” which literally means “to wipe clean” or “to pay a ransom”.

There are definitely rituals where the idea of cleansing is taught in the usage of the word “atone”. For example, when the blood of the animal is applied to the horns of the altar (Lev 4:25) or mercy seat (Lev 16:14), it is for cleansing purposes. But it is not the case when used in relation to burnt-offering. The blood of the animal is sprinkled onto the ground rather than applied to any specific object. The focus is on the burning of the animal and the sweet savour that ascends upwards rather than an attempt to clean the worshipper or the priest or the altar. According to Wenham, **the idea of the burnt-offering then would be one of ransom rather than cleansing**. Do you agree with him?

In the OT, the idea of ransom is a very humane act. It allowed the guilty sinner to be punished with a lesser penalty than he deserved. For example, an Israelite owns a dangerous ox which runs amok and gores and kills someone. The owner is liable to die for this crime. But if he pays a ransom, his life will be spared. **Exodus 21:29-31**, *“But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. **If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him.** Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him.”* This was also true for the sin of adultery. The aggrieved husband was entitled to put the lover and his adulterous wife to death but if a ransom was given and he accepted it, the death penalty could be stayed.²

But premeditated murder was excluded in this concept of ransom. **Numbers 35:31-33**, *“Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death. And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.”*

Another instance whereby “to make atonement” has the idea of “ransom” is in 2 Samuel 21:3-6. Israel suffered famine because King Saul killed the Gibeonites who had entered into a covenant with Israel in the days of Joshua. So David asked the

¹ Gordon J Wenham, **The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Leviticus**, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), page 59.

² **Leviticus 20:10**, “And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” And **Proverbs 6:33-35**, “A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.”

Gibeonites, “*What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?*” (2 Sam 21:3b). In other words, David asked “what shall I pay as a ransom?” The Gibeonites asked for the lives of seven of King Saul’s sons to atone for Saul’s sins. They did not want gold or silver. The death of Saul’s relatives saved the lives of the family and the whole nation of Israel.

Therefore, the meaning of burnt-offering is of ransom. The verse in Leviticus that explains this concept best is **Leviticus 17:11**, “*For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement [caphar] for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement [caphar] for the soul.*”

Is the burnt-offering ONLY of ransom and NOT cleansing as Wenham has proposed?

APPLICATION – The burnt-offering provided superficial cleansing in that the conscience could not be cleansed permanently by the blood of animals. **Hebrews 10:4**, “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*” Hebrews 10:4 reveals the limitations of the Levitical system of sacrifices. The animal offerings could not take away the sins of man permanently and continuously. Only Jesus Christ and the shedding of His precious and priceless blood can take away sins permanently.

The blood of animals was not completely useless in that it had absolutely no efficacious qualities. It was effective in that it was able to cleanse the worshipper, who offered by faith, externally. **Hebrews 9:13-14**, “*For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: **How much more** shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*” [Emphasis added] The connection between Christ’s sacrifice and the animal sacrifices would be meaningless if the latter did not have efficacious qualities. The fact that it had some level of efficacy makes the phrase “how much more” more significant! The blood of ox and goats and sheep provided a temporal external cleansing whereas the blood of Christ provides an eternal and permanent cleansing both internally and externally.

The Christian and the Burnt-offering – The Lord Jesus Christ is our burnt-offering. He ransomed as well as cleansed us of all our sins. He offered Himself as our once for all sacrifice. We do not need to bring any animal sacrifices because Jesus paid it all. **Hebrews 10:7-14**, “*Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*”

The burnt-offering teaches us that sin can only be atoned for by a bloody death. The heinous nature of sin which angers God and which should result in the wrath of God being poured down upon the sinner is vividly portrayed by the manner in which the burnt-offering was offered before the LORD. We who claim to be born again must not

treat sin lightly even though our salvation is free. To do so would be to cheapen the death of our Saviour, the perfect Lamb of God. Let us walk in the light of God's truth and be grateful for the finished work of Christ on the cross, for He is our burnt-offering sacrifice for our sins. **1 John 1:7-9** says, "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

B. With Consecrated Labour: Meat Offering --- 2:1-16; see also 6:14-23

The Hebrew word used to describe the meat-offering is "minchah." This is the technical term as used in Leviticus 2. But this is not the only usage. It can be used to describe a blood offering as well. Genesis 4 describes Cain's and Abel's offerings wherein Abel offered an animal sacrifice. Other instances where the word refers to animal sacrifices are in 1 Samuel 2:17, 29; 26:19.

For non-religious usages in the Scripture, the word is used to mean a tribute by a vassal king to his overlord as a mark of his continuous goodwill and devotion (Judg 3:15, 17-18; 2 Sam 8:6; 1 Kgs 4:21; 10:25; 2 Kgs 17:3, etc.). Very often, it carries the idea of fear whereby the giver seeks to ingratiate himself to the recipient by bringing minchah. This was true of Jacob when he gave minchah to Esau in Genesis 32:18ff. This was also done to Joseph who was the designated prime minister of Egypt in Genesis 43:11, 15, 25-26.

It is proposed that this non-religious usage be transferred into the meaning for the religious use. This being the case, the meat offering could be understood as a tribute offering from the faithful and grateful worshipper to the LORD God. Israel was bound to the LORD by the Covenant relationship. It was a suzerainty covenant and God was the suzerain.

Very often the meat offering was offered in conjunction with other offerings. For example, in **Exodus 29:41**, "*And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.*" It was offered in conjunction with a drink offering. In **Exodus 40:29**, "*And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses.*" Here the meat offering was offered together with the burnt offering.

There were instances when the meat offering was offered on its own. For example, Lev 2:14 suggests that a meat offering of the firstfruits was brought to the altar during harvest time (see Deu 26).

Another instance involved a husband who brought a charge against his wife before the priests that she may have committed adultery. The husband had no concrete proof but only suspected that she had committed adultery. The wife denied the allegation. Both parties stood before the priests to determine if the suspicion was true. The meat offering was brought to the priests. The meat

offering (minchah) from the husband was known as a jealousy offering (minchah). **Numbers 5:15**, “*Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.*” Also in **Numbers 5:18**, “*And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse:*” Thus in this case, the minchah was NOT a tribute offering but more like a “payment” offering to the priest for work done! No frankincense or oil was poured onto it. Perhaps the reason is that this was a jealousy meat offering.

1. An Uncooked Meat Offering (2:1-3) –

Leviticus 2:1-3, “*And when any will offer a meat offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.*”

The meat offering is not to be offered whole. The offering shall be fine flour. Fine flour refers to the very best flour, a luxurious item fit for kings. [**Ezekiel 16:13**, “*Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.*” Also verse 19; 1 Kings 4:22-used in king’s palace; and Genesis 18:6 – for VIP guests - two angels and the LORD offered by Abraham].

A handful (portion) of it is brought to the priests by the worshipper. This is mixed with oil and frankincense and brought to the priest to be burnt on the altar. Oil represents separation for holy use and frankincense is for fragrance. The fragrant smoke would ascend toward heaven like the burnt-offering “as a sweet savour unto the LORD.” The remnant of the meat offering would be given to the priests for their consummation.

It was called “most holy” of the offerings. Literally, it means “a holy of holies” offering. The difference between the Holy of Holies and this holy of holies is in the use of the definite article. The former refers to THE most Holy Place which has the definite article, whereas the latter (the meat offering) does not have the definite article. These were to be eaten by the priests only (excluding their family members). They were also to be eaten inside the sanctuary in the Tabernacle and the holy chambers. **Ezekiel 42:13** points out, “*Then said he unto me, The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate place,*

they be holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place is holy.”

2. A Baked Meat offering (2:4-6) –

Leviticus 2:4-6, *“And if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. And if thy oblation be a meat offering baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it is a meat offering.”*

The first meat offering is unbaked or uncooked. This second meat offering is baked. If it is baked, the oblation (i.e. qorban) shall be without leaven (i.e. yeast). Fine flour is also used here but baked. Leaven has always been used figuratively as something sinful or bad. There is even a Feast of Unleavened Bread instituted immediately after the Passover feast that was to be observed annually. Having said that, there are exceptions where leavened bread could be offered as part of the thanksgiving offering. **Leviticus 7:13**, *“Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.”* And **Leviticus 23:17**, *“Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD.”* But as for the meat offering, it must be unleavened because of the “bad” connotation in the use of leaven. Some have argued that yeast brings fermentation which is likened to corruption. Others say that yeast was regarded as a living thing and the offerings God accepted were dead. The use of oil here is the same as in the case of the uncooked meat offering. It is to signify that this has been separated for holy use.

Pieces of this would be broken and oil poured onto it again and then presented to the priests for offering like before, although it is not expressly mentioned here. The remnant would also be given as most holy to the priests for their consummation.

3. A Pan Meat offering (2:7-10) –

Leviticus 2:7-10, *“And if thy oblation be a meat offering baked in the fryingpan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. And thou shalt **bring** the meat offering that is made of these things unto the LORD: and when it is **presented** unto the priest, he shall **bring** it unto the altar. And the priest shall take from the meat offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. And that which is left of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.”*

This is when the meat offering is baked on a flat pan. Again, it must be fine flour and mixed with oil. The reasons are the same. A portion of it would be offered to the LORD as the word “memorial” implies. The three verbs used here is significant — bring → present → bring. The first two verbs describe the acts of the worshipper whereas the third refers to the priest’s duty. The first verb “bring” is simply “to bring” whereas the third “bring” means to “bring near.”

This is offered also as a sweet savour unto the LORD. The remnant is also given to the priests for their consummation as food most holy.

4. A General Requirement of the Meat offering (2:11-13)

Leviticus 2:11-13, *“No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire. As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings [qorban] thou shalt offer salt.”*

Leaven and honey were not allowed to be used for the meat offering. Honey like leaven also causes fermentation and decay. Honey also contains living enzymes which is not allowed in the offerings to the LORD which comprise only dead things. Another reason could be that these items were used by the pagan cults at that time. Thus these items were forbidden to ensure a clear distinction between the worship of the one living true God and dead idols. The honey used here must not be limited to honey from bees only but all forms of nectar, some of which could be derived from flowers, were acceptable.

The word “oblation” (qorban) means “a sacrificial present.”

But honey and yeast or leaven may be used in other types of sacrifices such as firstfruits offering. The term “firstfruits” means “first”. The word “fruits” was added in since the word was used in that manner most of the time [e.g. **Deuteronomy 26:2**, *“That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there.”* (see also verse 10)]. Firstfruits were usually presented during the Feast of the Weeks (7 weeks or fifty days), or Pentecost which means fiftieth (23:15-22). Leaven and honey, among other items, could be used as long as they were firstfruits offered to the LORD as a form of thanksgiving, for all came forth from the Land of Promise. **2 Chronicles 31:5** says, *“And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in*

abundantly.” (see also Leviticus 7:13 which was offered as part of the peace offering.)

But the sacrificial present of the firstfruits were not to be burnt as a sweet savour sacrifice unto the LORD, although the firstfruits with leavened bread could be offered as a sweet savour unto the LORD during the **Feast of Weeks**. This was the exception. The firstfruits were not to be burnt as a sweet savour sacrifice unto the LORD here because the LORD had promised the firstfruits of the Land of Promise to Aaron and his descendants, i.e. the priests. Numbers 18 describes the food for the priests and the Levites. **Numbers 18:12**, *“All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee.”*

Salt was to be used in all the meat offerings. This was the first mention of salt as an indelible part of the Levitical Sacrificial system. Ezra was given large amounts of salt by the king of Persia for use in the Temple (Ezra 6:9; 7:22). What is the purpose of using salt?

Salt is a preservative. It retards decay as opposed to honey and leaven which bring decay. Because it is called here as salt of the covenant, it probably served as a seal and sign of the covenantal relationship between the LORD and His people Israel. All the meat offerings must be seasoned with salt.

Clarke comments, “Salt was the opposite to leaven, for it preserved from putrefaction and corruption, and signified the purity and persevering fidelity that were necessary in the worship of God. Every thing was seasoned with it, to signify the purity and perfection that should be extended through every part of the Divine service, and through the hearts and lives of God's worshippers. **It was called the salt of the covenant of God, because as salt is incorruptible, so was the covenant made with Abram, Isaac, Jacob, and the patriarchs, relative to the redemption of the world by the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ.** Among the heathens, salt was a common ingredient in all their sacrificial offerings; and as it was considered essential to the comfort and preservation of life, and an emblem of the most perfect corporeal and mental endowments, so it was supposed to be one of the most acceptable presents they could make unto their gods, from whose sacrifices it was never absent. That inimitable and invaluable writer, Pliny, has left a long chapter on this subject, the seventh of the thirty-first book of his Natural History, a few extracts from which will not displease the intelligent reader. ‘So essentially necessary is salt that without it human life cannot be preserved: and even the pleasures and endowments of the mind are expressed by it; the delights of life, repose, and the highest mental serenity, are expressed by no other term than sales among the Latins. It has also been applied to designate the honorable rewards given to soldiers, which are called salarii or salaries. But its importance may be farther understood by its use in sacred things,

as no sacrifice was offered to the gods without the salt cake.” [Emphasis added]

Poole, on the other hand, made these observations, “1. For the decency and conveniency of the feast, which God would have here represented. Or,

“2. For the signification of that incorruption of mind, and sincerity of grace, which in Scripture is signified by salt, Mr 9:49; Col 4:6, and which is necessary in all them that would offer an acceptable offering to God. Or,

“3. In testimony of that communion which they had with God in these exercises of his worship; salt being the great symbol of friendship in all nations and ages. *The salt of the covenant of thy God*: so salt is called, either,

“1. Because it fitly represented the durableness and perpetuity of God's covenant with them, which is designed by salt, Nu 18:19; 2Ch 13:5. Or,

“2. Because it was so particularly and rigorously required as a condition of their covenant with God; this being made absolutely necessary in all their offerings, as it follows; and as the neglect of sacrifices was a breach of covenant on their part, so also was the neglect of salt in their sacrifices. *With all thine offerings*; not these only, but all other, as appears from Eze 43:24; Mr 9:49.”

When we combine the two explanations together, we see that salt indeed had a spiritual significance in the Bible. Salt cannot be corrupted. It may lose its savour but it cannot be corrupted. It's qualities of purity and preservative powers were greatly employed in the early days before the invention of refrigeration. Meat and all sorts of foodstuff were seasoned with salt to keep them in the state of edibility. The use of salt in all the qorban offerings would therefore point to the holy covenant made by the LORD with Israel and that it cannot be corrupted not even by sin. It was a suzerainty covenant issued by God and based entirely upon God's faithfulness and not man's. The blessings derived from this suzerainty relationship were conditional upon obedience. Israel would be punished if they disobeyed and sinned against God, and Israel did fall into grave sins for many decades. The LORD did punish Israel grievously but it was done for Israel's well-being that Israel might return to the LORD.

Failure to use salt in the seasoning of their meat offerings would imply a breach on Israel's part in not acknowledging that the covenant was to be holy and pure. It came from a holy God to a people who were to be holy as well. **Salt** would remind Israel of this truth. The constant use of salt would remind Israel constantly of this great Truth! This was a binding incorruptible covenant as the covenant of salt represents. By the way, salt was known in antiquity as indestructible; it could neither be destroyed by fire nor decay with time. This means that God would not forsake His people and when the people offered their offerings with salt,

they would remember this truth about their covenantal God. **Numbers 18:19** says, “*All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.*” And **2 Chronicles 13:5**, “*Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?*”

5. A Firstfruit Meat Offering (2:14-16) --

Leviticus 2:14-16, “*And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: it is a meat offering. And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, part of the beaten corn thereof, and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD.*”

The firstfruits offering seems to be an exception to the meat offerings listed here. As opposed to the fine flour, this time it is green ears of corn. This is called the meat offerings of the firstfruits. In this case, the offerings would include green ears (Hebrew is “abib” which is also the name of the first month in the Jewish New Calendar Year) of corn dried by fire which has been beaten out of the full ears. Oil shall be upon it as well as frankincense. This mixture will be fragrant meat offering. A portion of the mixture would be offered to the LORD.

APPLICATION – The meat offering was one of the ways through which the priests were reminded and recognized the high calling given to them. They did not work in the fields or the farms and depended entirely upon God through His people to keep body and soul together. In addition to the meat offering, the firstfruits offering which were given to the priests for their subsistence also served as a reminder.

An offering of tribute -- The meat offering was a tribute which the people of God presented to Him but were given to the mediators of God and men, the priests. The bringing of the meat offering by faith expressed the worshipper’s fidelity to his God, and that he was thankful to Him for what He had been blessed with. **Deuteronomy 26:9-10**, “*And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:*”

Meat offering was also accompanied by other offerings. At the first offering conducted by Aaron and his sons, the meat offering was one of a series of offerings made to the LORD. **Leviticus 9:3-4**, “*And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for*

a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; Also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat offering mingled with oil: for to day the LORD will appear unto you.” In such an instance when the meat offering was offered together with the sin and the burnt offerings, then it would be seen as a kind of thank offering to the LORD who has forgiven the worshipper of his sins.

Meat offering offered as an offering of jealousy – If a man suspects and accuses his wife of adultery without concrete evidence and she denies it, he will bring her before the priest in front of the tabernacle. She will be asked to deny the charge or admit her guilt. If she says she is innocent, then she will be asked to drink a concoction mixed with water and the ashes from the altar. This concoction is called bitter water. In the course of this procedure, a meat offering of barley meal will be offered by the jealous husband. **Numbers 5:15** says, *“Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering [qorban] for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering [minchah] of jealousy, an offering [minchah] of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.”* The wife will be asked to drink the bitter water. If she is guilty, her thigh will rot and her belly will swell. If she is innocent, nothing will happen to her. **Numbers 5:24-26** says, *“And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering [minchah] out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering [minchah] before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar: And the priest shall take an handful of the offering [minchah], even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water.”* No frankincense or oil would be mixed into the offering in light of the fact that it is an accusation of adultery and there is nothing to celebrate and give thanks to God for. It is not a fragrant offering! It is a memorial or remembrance offering which is meant to bring sin or any iniquity into remembrance.

THE MEAT OFFERING AND THE CHRISTIAN – The meat offering when offered on its own is understood as a tribute offering. For the NT believers, it means that his life is to be a tribute lived for Christ. It is like the living sacrifice that the Bible speaks of in **Romans 12:1**, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* This is what the believer’s life should be . . . a fragrant thankful life to be lived for Christ as a sweet savour sacrifice. David Livingstone wrote in his journal on one occasion concerning his "selfless" life: “People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paying back a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind and a bright hope of glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a

view and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege.”

The meat offering was also meant to be the sustenance for the priests who devoted their entire lives to serve the LORD. They were not to work but to depend on God’s people to provide their daily food. Likewise this ought to be the manner in which pastors and fulltime workers and missionaries are to be cared for. The old adage of “Lord you make him humble and we will make and keep him poor!” ought not to be practised at all.

C. With Reconciled Communion: Peace Offering – 3:1-17; see also 7:11-34

The Hebrew word for “peace offering” is “shelem” from which the English word “peace” (shalom) is derived. Hence the Hebrew word “shelem” is translated as “peace offering”. The first occurrence of the word is in **Exodus 20:24**, “*An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy **peace offerings**, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*” [Emphasis added] The word occurs 84 times in the entire OT and is always translated as “peace offering” in the KJV.

Generally, for the most part, the peace offerings were restricted to the covenantal ceremonies performed inside the Tabernacle and performed by the priests. But there are exceptions. For example, **Deuteronomy 27:6-7**, “*Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God: And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.*” In this context, the burnt and peace offerings were done outside the Tabernacle and at the location where the curses and blessings were openly declared from the tops of mount Gerizim and mount Ebal. The burnt and peace offerings were necessary before the ceremony began. This was the instruction given by Moses to Israel before they crossed the river Jordan into the Promised Land. A sacrificial meal was normal at the conclusion of the offerings. This was the manner in which covenants were cut and sealed. The eating was a demonstration that the covenant was concluded and accepted by both parties. [**Deuteronomy 12:7**, “*And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.*”]

The biblical concept of peace is not like that of the world. The world’s idea of peace is the absence of war or persecution. Biblical peace means salvation from sin and death and Hell and reconciliation with God. This is the meaning used here in Leviticus 3.

1. Peace Offerings of the Herd – 3:1-5

Leviticus 3:1-5, “*And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer it of the herd; whether it be a male or female, he shall offer it*

*without blemish before the LORD. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And **Aaron's sons** shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.” [Emphasis added]*

Like the previous two offerings “if” is used to highlight the free will nature of the peace offering. It must be done from the heart or else. The worship of God is meaningless if it is reduced to a ritualistic observance. The use of the word “herd” here points to a reference to cattle, i.e. an ox. In this instance, the animal must be without blemish but it can either be a male or a female. “In the ancient Near East it was customary to sacrifice male animals to male deities and female animals to female goddesses.”³ If this is true, then perhaps the LORD did this as a polemic against the heathen paganistic practice of gender worship. However, it is an opinion that cannot be absolute. That a female animal was allowed indicates that this offering was of lesser importance than the burnt offering which was for the atonement of sins.

The procedure for the peace offering is the same as that of the burnt offering. The meaning of “lay his hands upon” here is also the same, i.e. to lean and press hard on the animal (Hebrew is “samak”). The worshipper will have to do the killing. Again, his hands will be bloodied and the significance of this offering will bear heavily on his heart and mind as a life is taken in order for him to make or have peace with the LORD. The animal will be killed in front of the LORD as depicted by the phrase “at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

The priests will collect the blood and sprinkle it around the altar where the offering is to be burnt. The significance of this act is the same as that for the burnt offering of an ox.

Unlike the burnt offering whereby the entire animal, except for the skin, was burnt on the altar, the peace offering involved only certain parts of the animal. These parts included: all the fat; the two kidneys; and the caul [i.e. the lobe or flap of the liver (as if redundant or out-hanging)].

All the fat—Throughout the OT, the fat is always considered as the best and choicest part of an animal or cereal. For example –

³M. Douglas, **Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo**, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 56.

Genesis 45:18, “*And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat **the fat** of the land.*”

Deuteronomy 32:13-14, “*He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, **with fat** of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, **with the fat** of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.*”

The word “fat” here is “*cheleb*” which means “finest grease or marrow”; hence the “choicest or finest part.”

[NOTE -- **Deuteronomy 32:15**, “*But Jeshurun waxed **fat** [“shaman”—to become grossly oily or fat], and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*” [Emphasis and explanation added]

Psalms 81:16, “*He should have fed them also with the finest [cheleb] of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.*”

To offer all the fat of the animal to the LORD would definitely mean the very best is offered to the LORD to gain the peace that is now present between God and the worshipper.

The Two Kidneys and the Fat by the Flanks – Why were kidneys used and so prized in the offerings so much so that they are mentioned in the sin as well as trespass offerings?

Burton Scott Easton in ISBE comments, “Accordingly, the kidneys with the fat surrounding them were burned in every sacrifice in which the entire animal was not consumed, whether in peace (Lev 3:4, 10:15; 9:19), sin (Ex 29:13; Lev 4:9; 8:16; 9:10), or trespass (Lev 7:4) offerings; compare the “ram of consecration” (Ex 29:22; Lev 8:25). . . . The position of the kidneys in the body makes them particularly inaccessible, and in cutting up an animal they are the last organs to be reached. Consequently, they were a natural symbol for the most hidden part of a man (Ps 139:13), and in Job 16:13 to “cleave the reins asunder” is to effect the total destruction of the individual (compare Job 19:27; La 3:13). This hidden location, coupled with the sacred sacrificial use, caused the kidneys to be thought of as the seat of the innermost moral (and emotional) impulses. So the reins instruct (Ps 16:7) or are “pricked” (Ps 73:21), and God can be said to be far from the reins of sinners (Jer 12:2). In all of these passages “conscience” gives the exact meaning. So the reins rejoice (Pr 23:16), cause torment (2 Esdras 5:34), or tremble in wrath (1 Macc 2:24). And to “know” or “try the reins” (usually joined with “the heart”) is an essential power of God’s, denoting His complete knowledge of the nature of every human being (Ps 7:9; 26:2; Jer 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; The Wisdom of Solomon 1:6; Re 2:23).”

With the understanding of the fat and kidneys, the offering of these parts for the peace offering symbolizes the very best must be given to the LORD. Anything less than the very best is unacceptable.

The Hebrew word for “flank” (kesel) means “the loin (as the seat of the leaf fat).” This is probably the innermost part of the body where the fat is most inaccessible. This makes it the very best of the fat, literally the fat of fats!

The Caul above the Liver – The Hebrew word for “caul” is “yothereth,” which is the lobe or flap of the liver or the membrane which covers the upper part of the liver.

The meaning is that the liver has often been used in the Bible to describe the seat of our emotions. For example –

Proverbs 7:23, *“Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.”*

Lamentations 2:11, *“Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.”*

These parts of the ox would then refer to the depths of a worshipper’s soul that is necessary when he offers the peace offering.

These parts are given to the priests who will then offer them upon the burnt sacrifice. This means that AFTER the burnt offering has been offered, the peace offering follows. These parts are to be burnt upon the “ashes or remains” of the burnt offering.

The significance is that “there can be no peace between God and man unless the atoning sacrifice has been offered.” Once the burnt offering has been offered, there is then peace between God and man. This he knows in his inner man as represented by the liver and kidneys.

Like the two offerings before, the peace offering will also be a sweet savour offering unto the LORD.

NOTE— The Hebrew root for these words: Flank can mean "confidence"; Fat or fatness means "best"; and Caul means "excellence." All these fats are cut out of the flank and caul and taken away and offered to the LORD. To give our best to the Lord is what the fat or fatness represent. To give to the Lord our best from our excellence is also what the caul represents. However, to give to the LORD our best from our confidence would probably mean "God confidence." If the worshipper is filled with self confidence he would probably not bring any offering at all for the redemption of his sins. The fact that he has brought his offerings and now has peace with God means that he

acknowledges before God that he will give his best and all things excellent to the LORD for the LORD is now His confidence.

2. Peace Offerings of Flock – 3:6-11

Leviticus 3:6-11, *“And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering unto the LORD be of the flock; male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the LORD. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat thereof, **and the whole rump**, it shall he take off hard by the backbone; and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And **the priest** shall burn it upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD.”* [Emphasis added]

If the peace offering is a sheep, the animal can also be either a male or female. The manner in which it is to be offered is the same as for the ox.

The only additional part of the sheep, which with the ox is not offered, is the “whole rump.” The rump refers to “the fat tail of the Oriental sheep.” Why is the whole rump offered?

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: “There is, in Eastern countries, a species of sheep the tails of which are not less than four feet and a half in length. These tails are of a substance between fat and marrow. A sheep of this kind weighs sixty or seventy English pounds weight, of which the tail usually weighs fifteen pounds and upwards. This species is by far the most numerous in Arabia, Syria, and Palestine, and, forming probably a large portion in the flocks of the Israelites, it seems to have been the kind that usually bled on the Jewish altars. **The extraordinary size and deliciousness of their tails give additional importance to this law.** To command by an express law the tail of a certain sheep to be offered in sacrifice to God, might well surprise us; but the wonder ceases, when we are told of those broad-tailed Eastern sheep, and of the extreme delicacy of that part which was so particularly specified in the statute.”

Again, with this explanation from JFB and the context of giving the very best to the LORD, this interpretation of the whole rump seems correct.

Another difference is that the word “priest” is in the singular which means that only one priest will conduct this peace offering sacrifice. Perhaps the reason is that the animal is much smaller compared to the ox.

3. Peace Offerings of Goats – 3:12-16

Leviticus 3:12-17, “*And if his offering be a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof upon the altar round about. And he shall offer thereof his offering, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour: all the fat is the LORD'S..*”

If the peace offering is a goat, the method of offering is the same as before. The rump is not mentioned. Male or female is also not mentioned. Only one priest will be involved in the offering.

That all the fat is the LORD's points to the great importance of giving to the LORD the very best. This is applied to the three kinds of animals.

Does this mean that the LORD actually ate the fat (in the case of peace offering) and the real meat (burnt offering) when these are offered to the LORD?

The answer is found in **Psalm 50:12-14**, “*If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:*”

4. A Perpetual Statute – 3:17

Leviticus 3:17, “*It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.*”

What will be a perpetual statute for Israel? The Israelites were not to eat fat or blood. This strong prohibition is repeated again in **Leviticus 7:23**, “*Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat.*”

Why was fat not allowed? Could it be for health reasons?

Matthew Poole has these reasons: The fat was forbidden,

1. To preserve the reverence of the holy rites and sacrifices;
2. That they might be taught hereby to acknowledge God as their Lord, and the Lord of all the creatures, who might reserve what he pleased to himself.
3. To exercise them in obedience to God, and self-denial, and mortification of their appetites, even in those things which probably many of them would much desire.

Why was blood not allowed? This is easier to understand because blood represents life. Since God is the source of life, the blood must belong to God and therefore to be returned to Him and not to be eaten by man. It is to be poured out before the altar.

Leviticus 17:10-12 explains, “*And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.*”

APPLICATION – Other than the peace offering being done together with the burnt offering, there are three other occasions where peace offering is offered. It could be offered as a **thanksgiving** (7:12); a **vow** (7:16); and a **voluntary offering** (7:16). {NOTE – We will look at these verses in detail when we study chapter 7.}

In Leviticus 3 we are not told whether parts of the animals were returned to the worshipper for him and his family to take back and eat. In the case of the burnt offering, the whole animal was burnt and given to the LORD. As to the meat offering, part of it was offered unto the LORD and the rest given to the priests for their consummation. But in the case of the peace offering, the animal was given back to the worshipper for his food. **Leviticus 7:15** says that it must be eaten in the same day, “*And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.*” **Deuteronomy 12:6-7** implies that the peace offerings were to be eaten by the worshipper, “*And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.*” The freewill offering was also the peace offering (see Lev 7:16).

The people who eat the peace offering must be clean. **Leviticus 7:21**, “*Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which pertain unto the LORD, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.*”

The peace offering is significant in that it follows the burnt offering as a vivid picture of the worshipper having gained peace from God now that his sins have been atoned for. When the peace offering is offered on its own, its meaning is determined by the worshipper’s purpose for bringing the offering. As he lays his hands on the peace offering in identification, he would probably say in his heart what and why he has brought the animal.

Eating meat in Israel was rare because it was costly. Therefore, when the worshipper offered a peace offering, he knew that part of the animal would be returned to him and his family for food. The best portions were given to the LORD and the rest for the worshipper to consume. Whenever he offered the peace offering, he and his family were reminded of the covenantal relationship that they had with God and how they were God's people and not like the people of the world! In this regard, it was as if the worshipper and his family were sharing a meal with the LORD. It is a picture of sweet fellowship with their LORD and GOD. It was personal and intimate.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE PEACE OFFERING –The term “peace offering” is not used in the NT. But that does not mean that the concept of peace offering is not found in the NT. The most likely inference to the peace offering in the NT is none other than the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is likened to the peace offering of the OT rather than the burnt offering because the burnt offering is not seen as a meal; the whole animal is offered unto the LORD as a representation of dying for the sinner's sin. The peace offering, however, involves a meal shared between the LORD and the worshipper who takes his offering back for food. The eating of the bread and drinking of the cup at the Lord's Supper feast has this same similarity and impact. Both require that the worshipper be “clean” when he approaches the LORD. Christ is our peace offering and we who are God's children partake of his body and blood as symbolized by the bread and the cup to signify this relationship and fellowship by having a meal with God as it were.

Question—If blood is not to be taken by man at all times, then how is it that the cup (or grape juice) is said to represent the blood of Christ, which means that we are drinking Christ's blood?

How do we interpret **John 6:53-56**, “*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*”?

“It is blood that makes atonement for sin, and by drinking it, the Christian is constantly reminded that he is saved by God and not his own efforts. According to the OT, the life enshrined in the blood was sacred because it was God-given. Man had no right to take God-implanted life. It must be returned directly to its Creator. Now, in the NT era, this atoning and life-giving power may be drunk by the creature to purge him of his sin and assures him of God's salvation. The Lord's supper should therefore be, like the peace offering, at once a solemn and joyful occasion: solemn because no human being can lightheartedly enter God's presence and pledge to keep his laws, joyful because God's grace and his promise exceed all that we can ask or think in this life and the next.” [Wenham, 83]

D. With Substitutionary Punishment: Sin Offering – 4:1-5:13; see also 6:24-30

This chapter of Leviticus teaches us that everyone sins, including the people of God. Sin does not distinguish between classes of people, for all have fallen short of God's glory including the priests. No one was exempted from giving

offerings; if the nation sins against God, an offering for the entire nation of Israel was necessary as well. The sin of ignorance is the sin emphasized here.

1. The Central Theme of Chapter – 4:1-2

Leviticus 4:1-2, *“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them:”*

The phrase “The LORD spake unto Moses” introduces us to a new section which is different from the first three chapters that deal with intentional sins. Chapters 4 to 6 deal with unintentional sins or the sins of ignorance.

Sin is more than just going astray or breaking the laws of God; it also includes the guilt that comes with sinning against God. The consequence of sins is also included when the Bible speaks of sins committed against God and that they must be dealt with by a sacrifice. Notice that in verse 2 the emphasis is on “shall do against” which means that it is not the sin of omission but commission. These acts of disobedience may have been done in ignorance (perhaps not having known the law at that point in time, though they were given and possessed the law as part of their covenantal relationship with God), yet they were still required to bring an offering for these sins. In other words, there can be no excuse for God’s people to sin, including the sin of ignorance. This is because of the covenantal relationship Israel had with God and the perfect Word of God in their possession.

If the sin of ignorance could be dismissed as no sin, then the carnal mind and willful heart will simply say to the soul: let us hide behind “ignorance” and not study God’s Word. We can get away with sinning against God since we “do not know!” Pollution from the sin of ignorance is still pollution.

This chapter reveals to us that as God’s covenantal people, we have to ensure that we know the Word of God, as much as possible, so that we will not sin against Him.

Can this sin of ignorance be applied to the unbelieving world, such as the Ammonites or Moabites who were Israel’s neighbours? How do we apply this in today’s context? Can the Sabbath Law be applied to unbelievers or can they hide behind the law of ignorance on the day of judgement when they stand before God?

2. When the Priest sins – 4:3-12

Leviticus 4:3, *“If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.”*

The anointed priest brings a bullock for sin-offering – Unlike the first three chapters of the Book of Leviticus where the emphasis was on the different types of offering, chapter 4 teaches the different people who were required to bring the sin-offering. Who is the priest that is anointed (“*mashiyach*”) here? Some say it refers to the high priest while others say that it simply refers to priests in general since all of them are anointed.

What do you say? Give reasons.

The first person for our consideration is the anointed priest. The most holy people in Israel could also fall into sins of ignorance. This might seem strange since they were teachers of God’s Truth! Yet this provision highlights the fact that teachers of God’s Word need to keep learning and there will always be many truths from God’s Word that they do not know. They will learn new doctrines as they study God’s Word.

If this is true then how do we interpret Spurgeon’s statement, “There is nothing new in theology except that which is false”?

When the priest sins, he has to bring a bullock, the most expensive animal! The key word is “anointed” which means “*mashiyach*” from which we get the English word “Messiah”. He has been anointed the mediator between God and man but that does not absolve him from committing the sin of ignorance when he does not study God’s Word. Perhaps the reason the anointed priest is to be examined first is the fact that he should know better! There is no excuse for the sin of ignorance especially among the anointed priesthood!

When the anointed priest sins, he becomes just like the common people. It appears as if he is no better than the ordinary Israelite. He has temporarily lost his “messianic” quality of mediatorship. Until his sins are dealt with, he will be regarded as an ordinary Israelite in need of cleansing for his sins.

The priest shall bring a young bullock without blemish to the LORD for a sin-offering. The Hebrew word for “sin-offering” is “*chatta’ah*” which comes from the root word “*chata*” which means “to sin”; hence an offering which is called a “sin-offering”. However, it must be understood that the sin-offering is not the only offering that deals with sin and the consequences of sin. It has already been shown that the burnt (Lev 1) and peace (Lev 3) offerings also deal with sin. This truth must be borne in mind to understand the usage of “sin-offering.”

The sin-offering is for the purpose of purification. How do we know? We know because of the use of the root word for “sin-offering”, which is “*chatta’ah*”. This word means “to purify”. Hence, the sin-offering has the idea of purification. Some examples include:

Numbers 19:12, “*He shall purify [chatta’ah] himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.*”

Numbers 19:19-20, “*And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify [chatta’ah] himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify [chatta’ah] himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.*”

Numbers 31:19-20, “*And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify [chatta’ah] both yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day. And purify [chatta’ah] all your raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats’ hair, and all things made of wood.*”

Job 41:25, “*When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify [chatta’ah] themselves.*”

Wenham comments rightly, “Sin disrupts the relationship between God and man, and between man and man. It poses a threat to the covenant relationship by provoking divine anger. But it has other side effects as well. If someone steals something, the owner will not only feel aggrieved but hopes for restitution of his property if the thief is caught. **Propitiation of divine anger**, it has been suggested, is an important element in the burnt offering. **Restitution**, it will be suggested, is the key idea in the reparation offering [trespass-offering—see Lev 5:14-6:7 (Hebrew Bible – 5:20-26)]. **Purification** is the main element in the purification sacrifice. Sin not only angers God and deprives him of his due, it also makes his sanctuary unclean. A holy God cannot dwell amid uncleanness. The purification offering purifies the place of worship, so that God may be present among his people. This interpretation of the term seems to be compatible with its root meaning, and to explain the rituals of blood sprinkling peculiar to it.” [Wenham, page 89] (Emphasis added)

This means that the sin-offering is to purify something, such as the altar or the house or even the person who brought the offering.

The bullock is the most expensive animal and it must be without blemish. The anointed priest is not above God’s law. He could fall into sin like every other Israelite. In fact, his sin could be considered more heinous than that of an ordinary Israelite because he has to offer the very best and most expensive beast so that he might be fit for service again as the mediator of God’s people. The priest’s sin affects his mediatorship. His sinfulness will jeopardize the entire nation’s approach to God for the forgiveness of their sins! By the anointed priest’s disqualification, the

nation would also be put in the same state of “disqualification”. Even if the Israelites want to bring their offerings to God, there is no one qualified to do the offerings on their behalf!

Therefore, when the anointed priest sins, it is far more grievous than for the ordinary Israelite. Is this also true for the leadership of the church today and in particular the pastor?

Can a pastor’s sin of adultery negate the efficacy of the sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and baptism of genuine believers?

Leviticus 4:4, *“And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock’s head, and kill the bullock before the LORD.”*

The anointed priest will bring the bullock before the door of the tabernacle, which means before the presence of God. He lays (to press or lean hard) his hands on the head of the bullock. The bullock is then killed by the anointed priest who had sinned against the LORD. His hands will be full of blood and the bull will be making loud noises as the blood is drained from its body.

Leviticus 4:5, *“And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock’s blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation.”*

A different anointed priest will now take over. The priest who had sinned cannot take the bullock’s blood to the tabernacle of the congregation, i.e. the tabernacle or the sanctuary where the holy place and most holy place is located. The reason is that his sins have not yet been cleansed or rather the cleansing process is not yet complete.

Leviticus 4:6-7, *“And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”*

Who is this “priest” in verses 5 & 6? One interpretation is that “the priest that is anointed” in verse 3 refers to the high priest. The “priest” in verses 5 & 6 is another priest. The question is: can he mediate the offering for the high priest who has sinned since he is lower in “rank”? If he can, then we can conclude that the high priest lost his “high priestly” authority when he fell into sin and has to bring his sin-offering.

If the priest in verses 5 & 6 is the same high priest who has sinned, then another question is: “Can a priest who has sinned against God, and who has yet to be purified, enter the holy place and conduct his own cleansing? Was it not a requirement that only a priest who is holy could do the work of mediatorship? The answer would have to be in the

affirmative. This is the very reason that this section of Leviticus highlights that the sin of an anointed priest was far more grievous than the sins of ordinary Israelites who did not have the privilege of being mediators before a thrice holy God.

My interpretation is that “the priest that is anointed” in verse 3 refers to all priests, including the high priest, because all the priests were anointed. The “priest” in verses 5 & 6 is the same anointed priest who mediates the sin-offering on behalf of the anointed priest who sinned.

It is a most shameful thing for a priest to stand on the other side of the offering process, especially when this is a public spectacle for all to see. As in the case of the burnt offerings, the sinner has to confess his sins to God in the presence of the mediator-priest as he lays his hand on the bullock. The impact on the anointed priest who sinned would be great. He would realize the enormity of his sins, the consequence of which is that he has “lost” the right of holy service. He has been reduced to an ordinary sinner who needs cleansing.

For the burnt and peace offerings, the blood is sprinkled outside of the sanctuary and at the altar of burnt offering. The blood from the sin-offering of the anointed priest is sprinkled inside the sanctuary before the “veil” (“*poreketh*”— used exclusively 23 times and only for the veil that separates the holy place from the most holy place). This act underscores the gravity of the sin of the anointed priest as the blood of his bullock that died for his sins is brought to the very border of the most holy place!

The blood is sprinkled before the veil seven times. The number “seven” is the number for completeness. It is the number for God (God rested on the seventh day!).

NOTE – This is similar to sins committed by the whole nation of Israel (see 4:17). God is telling us that the sin of ONE priest is likened to the sin of the WHOLE congregation. When one priest sins, the mediatorship that links sinful men to the holy God is jeopardized. If this is not restored and all the priests become derelicts and are disqualified from their service in the Tabernacle because of their sins, where will the repentant Israelites find cleansing for their sins?

Blood on horns of altar of sweet incense -- The blood is then placed on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD. This altar of incense is located inside the Holy Place in the centre of the room and in front of the veil. This ritual” is similar to what occurs on the Day of Atonement (see Exodus 30:10). The purpose of this act is explained in **Leviticus 16:16-19**, “*And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his*

*household, and for all the congregation of Israel. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. **And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.*** [Emphasis added]

This adds to the fact that the sins of anointed priests have a very devastating effect on their mediatorial privileges. Since sin-offering is for purification purposes, this act of sprinkling the blood onto the horns of the altar of incense (which emits fragrance constantly inside the Holy Place) would have to mean that the altar of incense has to be purified for the original purpose to be restored. The original significance of the altar of sweet incense is the fragrant life of the anointed priest and of the nation of Israel that must be lived in obedience; hence a life of holiness before the LORD. When they sin, their testimony ceases to be a sweet fragrance and they need to offer a sin-offering in order that their sins are cleansed and their lives purified again.

Pouring of the blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering -- With the purification of this altar of incense completed, the priest will go outside the sanctuary and pour all the remaining portion of the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering which is located outside the tabernacle of the congregation. This act points to the returning of all the remaining blood back to the LORD and back to where life originally came, i.e. the dust of the ground. David did something similar when his men, who loved him dearly, obtained water for him from Bethlehem at the risk of their own lives. David's wishes were their command. David was so touched by this act of devotion that he refused to drink the water and poured it onto ground as a symbol that he was returning it to the LORD. **1 Chronicles 11:18-19**, "*And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD, And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest.*"

The act of pouring all the blood onto the ground speaks of returning the life back to the LORD. The LORD gave the anointed priest who sinned his life and ministry. His life has been "redeemed" by the bullock; pouring all the blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering symbolizes that the life of the priest has been given back to the LORD for His holy use once more.

Leviticus 4:8-10, "*And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it*

shall he take away, As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering.”

Who is the “he” here? Is it the mediator-priest or the anointed priest who has sinned? Based on the same procedure in the previous offerings, then it will have to be the anointed priest who sinned. He will cut up the animal and present the fats to the mediator-priest who will offer them to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering. These are the best parts of the sacrificial animal and must be given to the LORD by burning. This is similar to when the peace offerings were offered (see 3:3-5, 9-11, 12-16). Verse 10 makes this abundantly clear - “as it was taken off the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings”. As mentioned before in chapter 3, these parts of the animal are very difficult to reach. They were regarded as the very best and only the best was given to the LORD.

Leviticus 4:11-12, *“And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt.”*

For the burnt offering, the skin of the bullock was given to the mediator-priest who conducted the offering. For the peace offering, the remaining portions were given to the priests for consummation. But the sin-offering was either returned to the LORD by burning on the altar of burnt offering or to be burned outside the camp. These parts were considered as less desirable parts. No one benefitted from the sin of the anointed priest - not the priest who conducted the offering on his behalf and definitely not the priest who sinned. The removal and burning outside the camp at a clean place symbolized the removal of sin from within the camp and more importantly from within the Holy Place where the priests functioned.

NOTE:- What is the statement "the priest shall make atonement for them/him, and it shall be forgiven them/him"?

The probable explanation is this -- It must be noted that the instruction for the sin of ignorance in Leviticus 4 is an emphasis on one aspect of a series of steps in order for the sin of ignorance to be expiated. Numbers 15:24-29 explain the series of offerings that are required when the sin of ignorance is committed. What is recorded here is only an explanation of what kind of animal is used for the sin offering and how the animal is to be killed. It is difficult for an anointed priest to sin the sin of ignorance. He is supposed to study and know God's Word as he is a teacher of God's Word. Furthermore the priests have to offer the sin offering and burnt offering every morning before they begin their service of receiving and offering the offerings of the worshippers every day. Based upon Leviticus 8:14-17 and 9:8-10, we see that the sin offering was offered at their consecration and their inaugural service as the first offering before a series of other offerings were made.

What it means is that this sin-offering offered by the priest every day was to cleanse them of the sin of ignorance, just in case one of them might have sinned against the LORD. If they have then the service they conduct on behalf of the people i.e. worshipper would be in vain. This was standard procedure that must be kept every day before they begin their ministry. They offered the sin offering first followed by the burnt offering before they could receive the offerings of the worshipper. This is why the phrase is not necessary here because the priests did this every day and it was not meant for a specific sin but for the entire priesthood.

3. When the Whole Congregation sins – 4:13-21

Leviticus 4:13-14, *“And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty; When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.”*

The focus now shifts to the whole congregation of Israel. What happens when the whole congregation sins against God inadvertently? They were really ignorant and not willful when they sinned. Verse 13 states clearly that the thing was hidden from their eyes. However, it was a sin against any of the commandments of the LORD which pertain to what is forbidden by God in Holy Scriptures. Thus, Israel is definitely guilty without a shadow of doubt!

The whole congregation will have to bring a sin-offering “when the sin is known”. If they do not know, then there is no requirement to bring a sin-offering. The sin-offering was not designed for the purpose of anticipating future sins. It was to deal with sins of ignorance that were made known to the sinners.

As in the case of the anointed priest who sinned, they have to offer a bullock to be brought before the Tabernacle of the congregation.

Leviticus 4:15, *“And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD.”*

The elders will represent the whole congregation and lay hands upon the head of the bullock. The bullock is killed before the LORD. Perhaps one of the elders will represent the rest and kill the bullock.

Leviticus 4:16-21, *“And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation: And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, even before the vail. And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at*

the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn it upon the altar. And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it is a sin offering for the congregation.”
[Emphasis added]

The elders give the blood to the anointed priest who will take the blood into the Holy Place. The rest of the procedure is done by this same priest.

The similarity between the sin of the anointed priest and that of the whole congregation is very obvious. But there is a slight yet important difference between the two. The difference is found at the conclusion of the sacrifice.

The act of purification does remove or wash away sins. Hence the phrase “shall make an atonement for them.” Their sins (including the sins of ignorance) will be forgiven once they are purified. To be forgiven means that the wrath of God is stayed and will no longer hang over the heads of Israel with impending judgement.

4. When the Ruler sins – 4:22-26

Leviticus 4:22-23, *“When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty; Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish:”*

The “ruler” refers to “the head of the tribe” or “the head of the division of the tribes” (see Exodus 18:21-26) or even “a king”. The fact that there is no definite article attached to the word means that the reference is not to a particular ruler but anyone who holds a position of leadership in any capacity. This section refers to the sin of ignorance as well as the inadvertent sin committed by the ruler which he was not aware of until he was told.

The animal he needs to bring for his sin-offering is a kid of the goats and it must be a male without blemish. This is more expensive than a kid of goats that is a female without blemish, for the common people. This is less expensive compared to the sin-offering of the anointed priest.

Leviticus 4:24-26, *“And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD: it is a sin offering. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of*

burnt offering. And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.”

The ruler will identify himself with the goat by the laying of his hand upon its head. He shall kill it in the same place where the burnt offering is killed.

The priest shall take the blood and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. The priest does not enter into the Holy Place as is required in the earlier two instances (for the anointed priest and the whole congregation who sinned). This implies that no defilement has taken place in the sanctuary when a ruler of the people sins in ignorance or sins inadvertently. It appears from this practice that the sin of ignorance of the ruler is less heinous in the sight of God than that of the priest that is anointed.

Why is that so? In what way is the sin of ignorance committed by the priest more heinous than that of the ruler whose sin is more heinous than that of the common people?

After the purification of the altar of burnt offering, the rest of the blood is poured out at the bottom of the altar. The best parts of the goat are offered to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering similar to the manner in which the peace offering is offered.

The same phrase “an atonement for him as concerning his sin and it shall be forgiven him” is used.

There is no mention here of what happens to the rest of the animal. Were the remaining parts brought outside the camp to be burned like those for the anointed priest who had sinned or the sin of the whole congregation?

The answer lies in **Leviticus 6:25-26**, *“Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it is most holy. **The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.**”* [emphasis added]

What is the significance of eating the remaining parts of the sin-offering, if any?

5. When the Common People sin – 4:27-35

Leviticus 4:27-28, *“And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then*

he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.”

The “common people” refers to “an Israelite” or “any stranger who lives in the Land of Promise.” The listing of his sins is the same as that of the ruler: sin of ignorance and inadvertent sin.

The animal sacrifice is a kid of the goats, a female without blemish. The male animal was always more valuable than the female in biblical times. The implication is that sins committed by the common people were less heinous than the sins of rulers and priests.

Leviticus 4:29, *“And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering.”*

The identification remains the same – it is the laying of hands on the head of the goat.

Leviticus 4:29-31, *“And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.”* [Emphasis added]

The steps are the same as that of the ruler’s. Presumably the remaining parts of the goat were also given to the priest. The only difference is that in this instance the offering is said to be a “sweet savour unto the LORD.” All the other three does not have this mention. Does it mean that the offering of the other three sin offerings are not sweet savour unto the LORD? If the others also are also a sweet savour unto the LORD then why is it not mention? Because this sin offering is only one of a series of offerings to be offered to the LORD, the sweet savour should apply for all.

Leviticus 4:32-35, *“And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar: And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.”*

The common people were allowed to bring a female lamb instead of a female goat if they chose to. This demonstrates the latitude given by God concerning the kind of sin-offerings allowed by Him.

Other than this difference, everything else is the same.

The Occasion for the Sin-Offering

Many of these occasions are private in nature. They include:

- a) A woman unclean as a result of childbirth (12:6);
- b) Anyone who has been unclean for some time as a result of a serious skin disease (14:19);
- c) Someone who has a bodily discharge (15:15);
- d) The dedication of priests (8:14);
- e) The dedication of the altar by God's people (Num 7:16);
- f) The dedication of the Levites (Num 8:8);
- g) On completion of the Nazarite vow (Num 6:14).

From Leviticus 4 we will find that the occasion covers two types of sins: the sin of ignorance and inadvertent sins. In the case of the priests, the sin offering was offered every morning together with their burnt offerings to cleanse them of their sins as well as to purify them so that they will be fit to do the work of the priest as mediators on behalf of the worshippers.

From Leviticus 5 it covers the sin of omission (see 5:1-4).

The Sin-offering and the NT

That sin pollutes is a concept that we find hard to accept. This is the reason **Hebrews 9:22** states, "*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*" The word for "purge" is "to cleanse or to purify." Sin stains us and this mark of stain is found in the things that we handle, which is why in the list of occasions above we find objects being purified for sacred use.

Are there such objects today that are marked with the stamp of "holiness"?

In the NT, we find Bible passages by Paul and John that teach the same truth about purification. The difference is that this purification is obtained for us through the blood of Christ. **1 Peter 1:1-2**, "*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*" And **1 John 1:7**, "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us [purifies us] from all sin.*" The

cleansing from sin that was secured in OT times through the sin-offering is now effected in the NT under the New covenant by the blood of Christ.

Is this statement true – In the OT it was the place that was purified, whereas in the NT the worshipper or people are purified.

In the book of Hebrews, the concept of offerings is greatly emphasized and explained compared to other NT books. For example in **Hebrews 9:11-14**, *“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge [purify] your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*

The uniqueness of what Christ has done for Christians is found in His all-sufficient sacrifice. His death and blood sacrifice achieved for us a cleansing that the blood of bulls can never do. **Hebrews 10:19-22**, *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”*

The sin-offering is mentioned in **Hebrews 13:10-16**, *“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”*

The Christian Application of the Sin-offering

- a) The “higher” your position, the greater the consequences of your sins;
- b) The sin of ignorance or inadvertent sin is still a sin to be reckoned with in the sight of God. Ignorance is no excuse when applied to professing believers who have the Word of God in their hands;
- c) Sin, when made known to us, must be repented of. **Proverbs 26:5**, *“Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.”*

APPENDIX TO THE SIN-OFFERING (Lev 5:1-13) –

I. Four Instances for application of sin-offerings –

1. **Sin of Silence (5:1) – Leviticus 5:1**, *“And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.”*

This is the sin of silence. A soul is guilty of sin when he witnessed or heard something about a crime or wrongdoing and he keeps silent. He has sinned, especially if the court is calling for witnesses to come forward. His refusal to come forward is a sin, i.e. for he shall bear his iniquity!

NOTE -- Proverbs 29:24, *“Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.”*

2. **Sin of Touching Unclean Dead Animals (5:2) – Leviticus 5:2**, *“Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty.”*

The list of dead animals includes beast (wild land creatures), cattle (domestic land creatures) and creeping things (such as reptiles that live on land and in water). This law does not include the dead carcasses of clean animals, otherwise they would not be allowed to cook and eat their meals including offering dead clean animals!

The sinner is held accountable whether he touches a dead animal accidentally or inadvertently (i.e. it was hidden from him). It makes him unclean and he is guilty of uncleanness. He has to bring a sin offering.

The word “guilty” is the Hebrew word “*’asham*” from which we get the word “trespass-offering.” It carries with it the idea of not only being found guilty but also to pay the penalty required for the sin committed. It is a word encompassing admission of guilt and consequence of sin.

3. **Sin of Touching Unclean Humans (5:3) – Leviticus 5:3**, *“Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty.”*

This is the sin of touching any unclean person. Who were the unclean persons in the Bible? Some of these included: a woman who has just given birth (Lev 12:2, 5); people with bodily discharges (Lev 15:2, 19); someone who eats an animal found dead (Lev 17:15); and a woman who is having her monthly period (Lev 18:19). Examples of the types or categories of uncleanness are found in Leviticus 12 to 15.

Anyone who touches any of these unclean individuals will also become unclean. He might have done it accidentally or inadvertently but he will

still be rendered unclean the moment he are told. He shall be guilty of uncleanness.

4. **Sin of Rash Oath (5:4) – Leviticus 5:4**, *“Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these.”*

Oath-making is very important in the Bible. It is better not to make an oath than to make one and not keep it (cf. Eccle 5:1-5). The case before us is one of making an oath rashly, i.e. impulsively or without thinking. The meaning of the word “pronouncing” is “to vociferate angrily.” Whether the content of the oath is evil or good, he is still duty-bound to keep it. The word “evil” here refers to “loss” rather than “sin or blasphemous deeds against God.”

When he is reminded of the rash oath that he made and failed to keep or refused to keep, he shall be guilty of sinning against God and will have to pay for the consequences of his sin even as he seeks the cleansing of his sin.

II. **Manner of expiating the above four sins (5:5-13) --**

Confess and offer a sin-offering (5:5-6) -- Leviticus 5:5-6, *“And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: And he shall bring his trespass offering [“asham” i.e. “guilt” or “fault”] unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.”*

The difference between Chapter 4 of Leviticus and the above is the confession of the sinner. This is more than mere admission of sin and guilt; it also includes the recognition of the sinner’s culpability for the deed. The word “confess” comes from the root word for “hand.” This means it has the idea of putting up one’s hand publicly like one who is guilty.

Now that he realizes that he has sinned against God and is guilty, he has to acknowledge his guilt, hence “trespass-offering” is used which means “a guilt-offering”. Although he sinned in ignorance initially, once he has been told of the sin it is still considered a trespass. Therefore it is also called a trespass or guilt offering. It is to be offered as a cleansing of guilt. He is now ready for purification!

He shall bring a female from the flock, either a lamb or a kid of the goats, both of which are considered clean animals fit for offering. The priest shall make an atonement (a covering) for him concerning his sin.

Poor sinner brings two turtle doves or two young pigeons (5:7-10) -- Leviticus 5:7-10, *“And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons,*

unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first, and wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide it asunder: And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: it is a sin offering. And he shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.”

If the sinner cannot afford (literally “does not have enough”) to offer a lamb or a kid of the goats, then he shall offer two turtle doves or young pigeons. These birds are relatively inexpensive and most would be able to afford them.

Two birds are offered because of the need for sin-offering as well as burnt-offering. The sin-offering is for the purpose of purification and the latter is for the atonement of sin. In the previous offering of a female lamb or kid, one bird is sufficient as the lamb or goat is seen as having dual functions - of atonement and purification.

The birds will be brought to the priest who shall take one of the birds and offer it as a sin-offering first. He shall wring off its head from its neck. This means that the head is not severed completely. Hence the phrase “the bird will not be divided.” The priest shall then sprinkle the blood of this bird onto the side of the altar, after which the remaining portion of the bird’s blood will be wrung out at the bottom of the altar. This would be the altar of burnt-offering.

The procedure for the second bird will be according to the manner of the burnt-offering recorded in Leviticus 1:14-17. This will be for the atonement (covering) of the sinner’s sin. Once it is completed his sin will be forgiven him.

Perhaps the first bird represents the blood of the sin-offering and the second bird represents the fat of the sin-offering.

Poorest sinner brings a tenth part of ephah of fine flour (5:11-13) -- Leviticus 5:11-13, *“But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering. Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: it is a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering.”*

If the sinner cannot afford even the two turtle doves or young pigeons, then he is to bring a bloodless offering. He shall bring a tenth part of an ephah⁴ of fine flour for his sin-offering. Since it is a sin-offering and not a meat offering (for thanksgiving), no oil or frankincense will be allowed. According to Numbers 28:5, this is the minimum amount to be offered on the altar.

⁴An ephah is equal to between three-eighths and two-thirds of a bushel which is the same as between thirteen and twenty-three liters.

The sinner shall bring this to the priest who will take a handful of this fine flour as a memorial and burn it on the altar of burnt-offering according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD. This will be the sin-offering for the purification and covering of the sin. His sin will then be forgiven him.

The remainder of the fine flour will be given to the priest who performed the sacrifice on his behalf.

Why is a non-blood sacrifice allowed for the sin-offering here? Does this mean that without the shedding of blood there can be forgiveness of sins?

NOTE -- **Hebrews 9:22**, “*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*”

A sin is a sin no matter who commits it. The service one renders to God will not lessen his sin and cannot be used a mitigating factor to cover his sin. Such an act is sinful in itself! Service rendered unto the LORD and living a holy life of obedience unto the LORD are two separate issues that must be observed and understood. A leader must set a higher standard of holiness for himself. In the kingdom of God, a leader must not abuse his position of authority and use it to cover his own sins and the sins of his “cronies”. He must rebuke sin justly at all times. This sin-offering with its “different” levels of offering highlights this truth very vividly.

E. With Righteous Reparation: Trespass Offering – 5:14-6:7; see also 7:1-10

1. When “ignorance is no excuse for sin” in the holy things (5:14-15)

Leviticus 5:14-15, “*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering:*”

To “commit a trespass” has the Hebrew word “*ma'al*” which means “to act treacherously or covertly”. The phrase “commit a trespass” must be read as one. In other words it is an act that is pre-meditated.

But it is used here with the phrase “sin through ignorance”. How is that possible? If he treacherously sins, how could it then be in ignorance? The only explanation is that he did not know God’s Truth regarding the holy matters of the LORD but wilfully committed that treacherous act not knowing that it was against the LORD Himself.

He has trespassed against the LORD. The second word for “trespass” is “*asham*” which means “a fault”. This is the root word for the “trespass-offering” mentioned at the end of verse 15. This offering is for the removal of the guilt of sin as well as reparation. Reparation is given to the LORD for a sin against the LORD in the holy things of the LORD.

The animal he brings must be a ram without blemish and must come from his own flock. He has to make a monetary payment (shekels of silver) according to the estimation of the priest after the sanctuary money. This will be the trespass-offering. It is to remove the guilt of the sin committed by the sinner with reparation.

What are the “holy things of the LORD”? This would probably include the offerings to the priests as “amends” have to be made to the priest because of this sin (cf. 22:1-16; Num 5:9-10); the objects of the Tabernacle (Num 4:15, 20) and Tabernacle contributions (Num 18:1-32 especially verse 32).

The payment made was in the form of the sanctuary shekel. The amount is not stated but it will be proportional to the trespass committed by the sinner.

2. Making amends (5:16) –

Leviticus 5:16, *“And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.”*

On top of the animal sacrifices that he must offer, the offender must pay 20% of the cost of the ram, which is not a meager sum (see also 6:5; 27:13, 15, 27, 31). This amount is given to the priest.

The delay or failure to provide for the priests and Levites will hurt them and their families. This penalty is right and acts as a deterrent so that the Israelites might remember to provide for God’s servants and their families who were not apportioned any land for their own use such as farming and shepherding. They depended entirely on the people of God to provide for their needs through their faithful offerings while they spend their time studying God’s Word and doing the work of God. This symbiotic relationship existed from the very onset of the Exodus when the LORD officially set apart the Levites as the priests for holy use.

After the above has been done from the heart, then the sin of the offender will be forgiven by the LORD.

3. When sin is committed in holy things surreptitiously – (5:17-19)

Leviticus 5:17-19, *“And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not, and it shall be forgiven him. It is a trespass offering: he hath certainly trespassed against the LORD.”*

It appears as if these last three verses act as a summary for the entire chapter but the use of the phrase “though he wist (know) it not” implies that he is not certain whether he has sinned or not. His conscience bothers him. In such a case, the sinner who is troubled by his conscience will bring a ram without blemish out of the flock and offer it as a trespass offering unto the priest. He assumes the worst and fears that he might have sinned a grievous sin against God’s anointed servants.

Then the priest will offer the trespass offering for him and his sins shall be forgiven him. He has certainly trespassed against the LORD as long as his conscience troubles him and he suspects that he might have transgressed. From this we see that every Israelite is presumed to know what these holy things are. They are not to take these priestly things, i.e. things which are meant for the priests only.

Difference between Sin-offering and Trespass-offering –

Some commentators see the trespass offering as a kind of sin-offering. But upon closer examination we see that they are quite different. The sin-offering involves covering of sin; but it also includes purification whereby the worshipper did not sin but still needs to bring a sin-offering. The case in point would be the person who is declared unclean when she has her monthly period or the one who is found in a tent when a person dies. It is not a sin but they are still declared unclean in the Scriptures.

But the trespass-offering is specifically for sins committed even though they were committed inadvertently and told to the sinner later; or when his own conscience convicts him even though he cannot be certain that he has actually sinned. Furthermore, the ritual of the offerings is also quite different. The sacrificial animals are different. The circumstances in which the offerings are made are different. There is the reparation offering which is not found in the sin-offering.

The Meaning of the Trespass-offering –

The trespass-offering points us to the fact that sin has both a social and a spiritual dimension. It offends God and hurts the one who was trespassed against. It affects not only fellowship with their neighbour but also with their Creator and Redeemer. Dealing with sin by the offerings of sacrificial animals is only one side of the coin; when they sinned against their neighbour they had also to make tangible restitutions.

This means that there is the aspect of satisfaction or compensation made by the sinner that is not covered by the previous sacrificial offerings. “The sacrificial system therefore presents different models or analogies to describe the effects of sin and the way of remedying them. **The burnt offering** uses a **personal picture**: of man the guilty sinner who deserves to die for his sin and of the animal dying in his place. God accepts the animal as a ransom for man. **The sin offering** uses a **medical model**: sin makes the world so dirty that God can no longer dwell there. The blood of the animal disinfects the sanctuary in order that God may continue to be present with His people. **The reparation offering** presents a **commercial picture** of sin. Sin is a debt which man incurs against God. The debt is paid through the offered animal (Wenham, 111).”

The NT and the Trespass-offering –

The trespass-offering is not mentioned in the NT. But Isaiah 53 is quoted several times in the NT (cf. John 12:38; Rom 10:16 // Isa.53:1; Matt 8:17 // Isa 53:4; 1Pet 2:24-25 // Isa 53:5-6; 1Pet 2:22 // Isa 53:9; Luke 22:37 // Isa 53:12). The sufferings and death of Christ not only represent our burnt-offering, peace-offering, and sin-offering, they are also our trespass-offering. The trespass-offering is a payment made for the sins we commit against God. Our spiritual debt has been paid in Christ. That is why whenever we sin we do not have to “do something” as payment to complete the forgiveness that Christ has already accomplished on our behalf. Christ is our all sufficient Saviour! But that does not mean that when we sin against our neighbour we do not offer restitution for what we have taken or done wrong.

F. Supplementary Teachings: Trespass Offering; Burnt Offering; Meat Offering; Sin Offering -- 6:1-30

Chapter 6 again covers the offerings mentioned in the previous five chapters which teach how the animals are to be offered and what kind of animals. Chapter 6 is about the application of the offerings that are taught and explains the duties of the priests. These are taught primarily from verses 8-20.

1. Trespass Offering – 6:1-7

Leviticus 6:1-7, *“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein.”*

- a. This is a continuation of the teaching of the trespass offering in chapter 5 even though the phrase “And the LORD spake unto Moses” is used. The reason it is a continuation is that it still focuses on the trespass offering. The difference is that it is NOT a sin of ignorance in the holy things of the LORD as is the case in 5:15.
- b. This section of Leviticus deals with the sin of stealing. When a sinner steals from another, he does not just sin against man but against the LORD as well. It is first and foremost a sin against the LORD that the sinner must be aware of. Hence the phrase, “If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD”. More often than not, when a sin is committed, the sinner fails to realize that he has sinned against the

LORD. Man is his first consideration. If I can hide from man, then I can hide behind and in my sin. Such reasoning is pandemic in our age and times. Illogical and carnal thoughts like these have spawned behaviour that resulted in ruined lives and generations of self centered global epicurean indulgences. Since the kindergarten years, our children are programmed to embrace the mentality that “exceedingly more than enough is enough”. They grow up never contented and continue to grab more and more of things they do not need. Possession seems to be the end all. Things are owned for the sake of ownership! This section of the Bible covers these sins of greed and theft.

c. Three ways to steal:

- i. **By deception** -- To “*lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship ... hath deceived his neighbour*” – The sinner acts deceitfully. He was given something to keep and safeguard or as a collateral (in fellowship) but he lies to keep it for his own. The final outcome is basically his word against another. Under such circumstances it is so easy to be tempted to steal the person’s belonging. It is a case of trustee turns liar!
- ii. **By Robbery** -- To “*lie unto his neighbour . . . in a thing taken away by violence*” – If he cannot get it by deception then he gets it by force and violence if necessary. The deceiver becomes a robber. A robber is someone who takes something by force. He will hurt and harm to get what he wants.
- iii. **By false ownership** -- To “*Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely*” – Lost and found does not equal “loser weeper, finder keeper!” Whatever is found has to be returned to the rightful owner. This must be done to the best of his ability. The finder would lie and even swear falsely to get what he wants. This is a good picture of the litigation process in our age and society!
- d. **Restitution and trespass offering together** -- The guilty sinner must restore that which he has taken plus an additional 20% of the cost or worth of the product to the rightful owner. The day to return all these is the day he offers his trespass offering. This is significant in that his repentance before God must be accompanied by rightful restoration. This principle remains valid today in our contact and dealings with one another regardless of whether the neighbour is a believer or not. We must maintain this standard of equal treatment with all men simply because we are Christians. This is Christian conduct!
- e. The trespass offering is a ram without blemish out of the flock plus an estimation to be decided by the mediator-priest. The priest will then make an atonement for him and his sin will be forgiven him at the end of the trespass offering.

2. Burnt Offering – 6:8-13

Leviticus 6:8-13, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it. And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed with the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place. And **the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out:** and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. **The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.**” [emphasis added]

- a. Chapter 1 describes the kinds of animals which are considered acceptable to God to be offered as a burnt offering. Here it describes the manner in which the offering is to be done by the priest but in greater detail.
- b. This is a “command” that Aaron and his sons and future priests must observe. It is not an option. This underlies the serious nature and importance of the role and duties of the priesthood throughout the OT. Without them the sins of the people of Israel could not be expiated for they were the only legitimate mediators on earth.
- c. This “the law of the burnt offering” is not a reference to Leviticus 1 which describes the burnt offerings that the nation of Israel brought after they sinned but the perpetual burnt offerings that Aaron and his sons had to offer daily (morning and evening) before the LORD. This is recorded for us in Exodus 29:38-46.
- d. The word “**burning**” in the phrase “burning upon the altar” in verse 9 is a *hapax legomena*, i.e. only occurrence in the whole OT. It is a feminine noun which refers to the plate on top of the altar of burnt offering which was used for the burning of all kinds of sacrifices. This burning or hearth or “plate” was to be kept burning at all times. Why must the burning to be continuous and never allowed to be put out? Here are some proposals: “that the soothing aroma should ascend continually to the LORD” [Hartley J. E., **Leviticus**, (Dallas: Word Publisher, 1992), 96.]; “to preserve the bond between God and His people” [Porter J. R., **Leviticus**, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 49.]; “it symbolizes the continual consecration of the Hebrews to the LORD” [Gispens W. H., **Het Boek Leviticus**, (Kampen: Kok Publisher, 1950), 104.]; “because the first offering in the tabernacle was lit by fire from heaven, and it must be continued so that the offering should be burnt with heavenly fire” [Calvin J., **Commentaries on the Last Four Books of Moses**, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprint of 1852 translation), 364.]; “the fire was the

divinely appointed symbol and visible sign of the uninterrupted worship of the LORD” [Keil, 318].

The Bible does not say explicitly what the significance of the continuous burning of the fire on the altar of sacrifice means. We can only propose suggestions that might at best be only a possibility. If the burnt offering symbolizes “the atonement of our sins” then the “continuous burning of the fire” could be “a continuous reminder to the people of Israel of the importance of the atonement of their sins before anyone could approach the one living and true God, and that He is in the midst of Israel, His people. Furthermore, this is also the altar where all the offerings are burnt and the first “holy” item of the tabernacle that the people of Israel approach before the process of atonement or purification or thanksgiving can begin.

- e. **The dressing of the priest in cleaning the altar** – The priest who is doing this duty of cleaning the altar of burnt offering where the fire is kept burning, must put on his priestly garments. “According to the Talmud (Talmud 1:2), lots were cast to determine which priest received the duty of removing the residual ash. When carrying out this task the priest is to wear his full priestly garb: this includes his white linen outer garment and his white linen ‘undergarment’. The latter term derives from a word meaning ‘gathered together’—these garments cover the area from the loins to the thighs and they apparently bunch up at the place of the private parts. No nakedness is to be exposed in the worship or work of the tabernacle (see Exodus 28:42-43).” [Currid, 79-80.] This cleansing process was not simply “house” cleaning but a duty performed in the work of the sanctuary. The person doing it had to understand the awesome responsibility he was given, even though it looked mundane and obviously quite messy and definitely unsightly.

But when the ash of the altar is to be brought to outside the camp of Israel unto a clean place, the priest must change his priestly garments into ordinary clothes. A clear distinction must be made between the work of the holy and the unholy, i.e. inside the tabernacle of the LORD and outside of it. The holy garments must not be worn outside of the precinct of the tabernacle. “The Talmud requires that a small amount of ash be preserved next to the altar for continuity with the next day’s burnt offerings”. [Currid, 80].

- f. **The wood-offering**--Every morning the priest will put wood on the altar and get the altar ready for the morning burnt offering. Nehemiah tells us that this was called the wood offering (Neh. 13:31). Wood was donated at fixed times as well. This was done by the priests, the Levites and the people casting lots as to who would collect and bring in the wood. Nehemiah 10:34 reveals, “*And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law.*” The Palestinian Talmud states that the wood was donated four times a day and then sorted for rot and wormwood

and the sound wood would be kept in a store room located on the south side of the temple complex. This was of course in the time of Solomon.

- g. **The peace offering mentioned** – The mention of the fat of the peace offering highlights the importance of the fire that must be kept burning on the altar of burnt sacrifice. The fat was the most significant and precious part of the animal for burnt offering as well as peace offering. In addition, the fat comes from the peace offering which is offered after the sinner has made peace with God through the atoning sacrifice which is the burnt-offering. That the fat of the peace offering is mentioned here points to the peace that the sinner will have with his God AFTER his sins have been forgiven and washed by the blood. It was a costly price paid for the remission of sins committed.
- h. Note that the beginning of verse 12 and the end of verse 13 are the same. The repetition is emphatic. It is to be a continuous burning and never to be put out.

3. Meat Offering – 6:14-23

Leviticus 6:14-23, *“And this is the law of the meat offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the LORD, before the altar. And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meat offering, and shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour, even the memorial of it, unto the LORD. And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it. It shall not be baken with leaven. I have given it unto them for their portion of my offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering. All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made by fire: every one that toucheth them shall be holy. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, This is the offering of Aaron and of his sons, which they shall offer unto the LORD in the day when he is anointed; the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat offering perpetual, half of it in the morning, and half thereof at night. In a pan it shall be made with oil; and when it is baken, thou shalt bring it in: and the baken pieces of the meat offering shalt thou offer for a sweet savour unto the LORD. And the priest of his sons that is anointed in his stead shall offer it: it is a statute for ever unto the LORD; it shall be wholly burnt. For every meat offering for the priest shall be wholly burnt: it shall not be eaten.”*

- a. This is a repeat of the meat offering mentioned in Leviticus 2 but with a difference. Like the burnt offering above, Leviticus 6 describes the meat offering from the perspective of the priests.
- b. The persons carrying out the offerings are the priests. The sinners bring the offerings but the priests are the ones doing the actual offerings. A handful of the meat offering will be offered to the LORD upon the altar

of burnt offering. The offering with the oil mixed into it will be a sweet savour unto the LORD.

- c. The remainder of the meat offering will be given to the priests for their own use. They will eat them together with the unleavened bread inside the Tabernacle compound, which is the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. This would be the outer courtyard where the people of Israel could mingle around. It is a busy place where people will be queuing to offer their offerings and having their offerings inspected and so on. The standard of holiness for this exercise is the same as when they eat the sin offering and trespass offering.
- d. The phrase "every one that toucheth them shall be holy" does not mean that a commoner touches the holy thing and he becomes holy. What it means is that the person who touches i.e. eats the holy thing shall himself be holy. Similar expressions are found in verse 27 as well as Exo 29:37; 30:29; Deut 22:9. Elliger explains, "He enters a state in which anyone who is not a priest trained to act discreetly will soon provoke God's special wrath against himself. At least he can only free himself from this state by undergoing a special act of purification." Do you agree with Elliger's explanation? If Elliger is right, then where is the instruction on how to make the "holy" person "common" again?

I do not agree with Elliger's explanation. The Book of Haggai reveals that a commoner does not become holy by touching a holy thing. **Haggai 2:11-14**, *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean."* A person who is holy can become unholy or unclean by touching an unclean thing but not the other way round. What the phrase means is that the food is for holy people only, i.e. the ones who are allowed to touch the food must be holy.

- e. Verse 19 onwards describes the meat offering offered by the priests themselves. On the day of their consecration, i.e. every priest on the day of their consecration, they must observe what is taught here. This is understood from the phrase "it is a statute forever unto the LORD." For Aaron and his sons who will be the first to inaugurate this holy office, it begins with them but it will not end with them. The portion they offer is a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour. It is baked with oil so that when it is burnt it will emit a sweet fragrance and will ascend unto the LORD as a sweet savour sacrifice. The priests begin the day with half of the meat offering and at the close of the day with the other half; both of them would be considered as a sweet savour unto the LORD. The significance of this exercise is that the priest must realize that he begins

his ministry as a sweet fragrance unto the LORD and must end it as a sweet fragrance unto the LORD. The problem is that it is easy to start well when the priest is fresh and a novice and he begins to learn the duties of his ministry with humility. When he matures and in time learns the ropes of the trade and when familiarity sets in, he becomes complacent and could even take advantage of the privileged position he becomes a senior priest and is no longer a novice. That is when he is most prone to fall into sin and allow the temptations of the world to corrupt him and his blessed ministry. Has anything changed since the time of Aaron and his sons? Not very much, sad to say.

- f. Since the offerings come from the priests unto the LORD, the meat offerings have to be wholly burnt. They shall not be eaten at all. The significance is that the consecration of the priest's life as a sweet savour will be unto the LORD in its entirety. He is not to please man but God only. If he eats from what he has offered unto the LORD, it is like taking back what he has consecrated to the LORD.
- g. NOTE-Gordon Wenham seems to see the phrase "*in the day when he is anointed*" as "on the day he is anointed". He interprets this to mean a daily offering instead of an inaugural offering. He supports his interpretation with Hebrews 7:27. What do you say to this interpretation?

4. Sin Offering – 6:24-30

Leviticus 6:24-30, "*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it is most holy. The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy: and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place. But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden shall be broken: and if it be sodden in a brasen pot, it shall be both scoured, and rinsed in water. All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy. And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire.*"

- a. This is a similar situation to what we have learnt about the above two kinds of offering - the burnt offering and meat offering. The perspective will be the priest's.
- b. The priest who does the offering for the sinner shall eat the sin offering. It will be his food. The location will be the same as before, in the court yard of the tabernacle of the congregation. The only people allowed to eat the food will be holy people. Commoners are not allowed to eat of the food.

- c. If the priest's garment is sprinkled with blood, then it must be washed in the holy place, i.e. inside the courtyard where they eat the holy food. The earthen vessel that is sodden with blood has to be destroyed. Unglazed pottery will surely absorb the blood and cannot be washed off. A brazen pot stained with blood can be cleansed; it will be scrubbed and rinsed with water.
- d. All the males of the priests shall eat therefore. It is a most holy exercise.
- e. But the sin-offering that requires the blood to be brought into the holy place where it is sprinkled inside the sanctuary of the tabernacle cannot be eaten. It must be wholly burnt in the fire. The Day of Atonement requires the blood of the sin offering to be brought into the most holy place by the high priest to be sprinkled onto the mercy seat, albeit once a year. That sin offering must also be burnt and not be eaten.

G. Supplementary Teachings: Trespass Offerings, Burnt Offerings, Meat Offerings and Peace Offerings-- 7:1-38

Chapter 7 is much like chapter 6 wherein certain of the offerings mentioned earlier will now receive supplementary explanation. Again, this will be seen from the priest's perspective and his role and duties are explained in some detail.

1. Trespass Offering, Burnt Offering and Meat Offering – 7:1-10

Leviticus 7:1-10, *“Likewise this is the law of the trespass offering: it is most holy. In the place where they kill the burnt offering shall they kill the trespass offering: and the blood thereof shall he sprinkle round about upon the altar. And he shall offer of it all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul that is above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away: And the priest shall burn them upon the altar for an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a trespass offering. Every male among the priests shall eat thereof: it shall be eaten in the holy place: it is most holy. As the sin offering is, so is the trespass offering: there is one law for them: the priest that maketh atonement therewith shall have it. And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered. And all the meat offering that is baken in the oven, and all that is dressed in the fryingpan, and in the pan, shall be the priest's that offereth it. And every meat offering, mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one as much as another.”*

- a. Vv 1-5 -- It is most holy. This sets the tone for the role of the priest in handling the trespass offering.

- b. The place where the burnt offering is killed will also be the same place where the trespass offering is killed. The blood will be sprinkled round about the altar as an offering poured out to God.
- c. The parts of the animal for the offering are similar to the peace offering (3:3-5) and sin offering (4:8-9). These are the insides and most difficult parts of the animals to reach after the animal is slaughtered. The significance is that these represent the very best as well as the conscience of the worshipper - the inward parts of the worshipper as opposed to the outward appearance. The idea is he is offering the trespass offering from the depths of his soul in sincerity. The burning of all the parts on the altar of burnt offering points to our offering (i.e. ourselves) entirely to God.
- d. Vv 6-7 – The balance of the trespass offering will be eaten only by the male priests. This means that the rest of the family are not allowed to eat; only priests and soon-to-be priests (young boys) are allowed to eat. It shall be eaten in the holy place. Since only priests are the only ones allowed to enter the holy place, they are the only ones who can eat. This is most holy. It must be followed strictly.
- e. The sin offering will also be the same as the trespass offering.
- f. The last part of verse 7 seems to imply that the priest who does the trespass offering becomes the owner of the portions that remain. He can do whatever he wants with them in terms of sharing the parts with other priests.
- g. V 8 – The skin of the burnt offering belongs to the priest who does the offering. This is a good bargain. The priest who offers an ox or goat or sheep will have much to gain. The offering of pigeons or turtle doves will mean less to gain for the priest in terms of material benefit. The skin is useful and expensive. It gives the priests a lot of power and discretion. Therefore if the priests are godly and good, the system will not be abused. But if the priests are corrupt and carnal, the system will be easily abused. This system relies on the priests to honestly and justly execute the offerings.
- h. Vv 9-10 – The balance of the meat offering is given to the mediator-priest.

NOTE – Great responsibility and discretion were given to the priests, and only the fear of God could keep them in check. The lee way and open door for them to abuse their power was readily available. They were the only ones who had sovereign right and control over the entire Levitical system of worship. There was no stopping them from abusing their power and position.

If they do not teach the Israelites correctly, they would inevitably starve to death. The entire priesthood depended on the proper functioning and application of the Levitical system of sacrifice. If it failed, the priesthood

would starve to death. Once that happens, they would have to go out to find food with no land or livestock. In an agrarian society it would be nearly impossible. They would literally have to beg or live the life of a vagabond to find food and lodging. They would have to depend on the kindness and mercy of fellow Israelites.

This hypothetical vicious cycle really existed in the days of the Judges for over 350 years. The main culprits were the priests. They did not teach the people who in turn did not offer. The people did not offer so the priests did not have. The priests did not have and they did not study. The priests did not study so they could not teach!

Rev Tow taught us affirmatively in FEBC that those who are in the fulltime ministry should neither own a business nor do business. They would be distracted and in time would neither study nor teach the Word of God and the period of the Judges would ensue inside the church. The people would perish for lack of God's Word.

2. Peace Offering cum Thank Offering – 7:11-21

Leviticus 7:11-21, *“And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer unto the LORD. If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried. Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings. And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave offering unto the LORD, and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten: But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity. And the flesh that toucheth any unclean thing shall not be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire: and as for the flesh, all that be clean shall eat thereof. But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which pertain unto the LORD, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.”*

Peace offerings were already discussed in Leviticus 3:1-17. This section supplements the instructions for peace offerings from the priest's

perspective. It would appear that the peace offering is to be eaten by the worshipper himself and presumably by his family as a whole.

- a. Vv 11-13 – When a peace offering is offered in thanksgiving to God, it becomes a thank offering. The worshipper has committed no sin. He is filled with gratitude to God, for whatever reason or reasons, and wishes to thank God for His blessing toward him by offering a peace offering of thanksgiving.
- b. It appears that in such an offering of thanksgiving, both leavened and unleavened bread are allowed to be used. This might imply that it is less “sacred” than the burnt, peace, sin and trespass offerings whereby only unleavened bread, described as most holy unto the LORD (cf. 6:17, 29; 7:6) is allowed. This phrase is not used here.
- c. What he offers, i.e. the animal, must be accompanied by all the non blood elements listed in verses 12-13. These will be given to the mediator-priest to offer on his behalf.
- d. Vv 14-15 – The kind of animals for the peace offering will be according to the list mentioned in chapter 3, which includes an ox, sheep and a goat. This thanksgiving offering must be eaten on the same day. Some portions of the animal will be given to the priest and the rest returned to the worshipper for his family to consume within the same day.
- e. It is called a heave offering because it refers to a tribute that must be willingly given from the heart. For example, this word “heave offering” is used in Exodus 25:2-3 to appeal for a freewill offering from Israel for the construction of the Tabernacle, “*Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass.*” The root word for heave in Hebrew is the word "to raise or lift up." It is a gift or an oblation that is freely offered not because he has to but because he wants to.
- f. The animal that is offered must be eaten on the same day by the family and the worshipper and also the priest who is given a portion of the peace offering.
- g. Vv 16-19 – But if the peace offering is offered due to a vow that was made by the worshipper, there will be slight differences to the eating. The worshipper is allowed to eat up to the second day only and anyone who eats it on the third day will be “*an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity*” [root meaning for “abomination” is “to stink”]. On the third day, the leftover food must be burnt with fire, i.e. returned unto the LORD. If it is eaten on the third day, the peace offering which was offered as a vow will not be imputed unto him. He and his offering will be rejected by God. The thanksgiving peace offering can be turned into an abomination,

i.e. to stink in the sight of God, if this “simple” eating time frame is not adhered to strictly.

- h. What is the significance of eating on the first two days? The meaning is seen in God’s rejection if eaten after the second day. Apparently the acceptance of the vow-peace offering and the thanksgiving–peace offering depends on the eating. Remembering that eating is how a covenant is concluded in OT times, eating the peace offerings would indicate the final conclusion of the offerings offered unto the LORD.

But the same day and extended day time frame has yet to be explained. The Passover was a feast eaten on the same day (see Exo 23:14-18; 34:25; Deut 16:4). [At the first Passover, Israel had to exercise haste when they left Egypt.] Could this be an issue of living by faith one day at a time? It can’t be, as the context is not one of faith; also, the vow-peace offering could be eaten on the second day.

Clarke comments, “He shall not leave any of it until the morning - Because in such a hot country it was apt to putrefy, and as it was considered to be holy, it would have been very improper to expose that to putrefaction which had been consecrated to the Divine Being.”

DO YOU AGREE WITH Clarke’s commentary?

Family Bible Notes comments, “this was probably to prevent its being reserved by the offerer for his private use. He had devoted it to Jehovah, and now it was no longer his own. Of it he was to make a feast for his friends, and especially for the poor of his people.”

DO YOU AGREE?

Gill, “which was ordered to encourage liberality to the priests, Levites, and others, since all must be eaten up before morning: according to the Jewish canons, they might eat it no longer than midnight; by that time it was to be all consumed; and it is said, the wise men made an hedge to the law to keep men from sin.”

DO YOU AGREE?

My view is: in the case of the Passover the circumstances demanded that they ate on the same day. In the case of the thanksgiving-peace offering and vow-peace offering, the issue was of preventing abuse. The offering has been made holy and the sooner the worshipper completed the offering by eating ALL of it the better it was for him. It would be abuse if what had been made holy was desecrated by absentmindedness or foolish actions which would render the entire process null and void. This is in line with the second day limit injunction and how severe an injunction it is. NOTE the phrase “the flesh that toucheth any unclean thing” in verse 19a.

- i. Vv 20-21 – The person who is unclean is not allowed to participate in the eating. It is unclean to be in contact with a dead person or a woman in her monthly cycle or one who has a skin disease, etc. An unclean person would be cut off. To be cut off would involve either death, ostracism or some other form of punishment.
- j. The injunction is repeated in verse 21 for emphasis.

3. **Command Not to Eat Fat and Blood – 7: 22-27**

Leviticus 7:22-27, *“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat. And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use: but ye shall in no wise eat of it. For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, even the soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people. Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.”*

- a. **Vs. 22-25** – The fat of the clean animals which are singled out for sacrifices is not allowed to be eaten at all. This applies not just to animals that were offered but also to the animals not offered to the LORD. The fat from animals not offered but were killed by wild animals are not allowed to be eaten though it can be used for other purposes - as oil or polish or grease for farm instruments or other items.

The fat represented the very best to be given to God. Since it was always consumed by God, it was not allowed for common consummation. This was to guard against any abuse by the people of Israel. They had to be constantly reminded of the difference between what was holy and what was common. What was good enough for man was not good enough for God. God’s standard is higher than man’s. Man will reason that whatever is not sinful, we are allowed to do so long as we do not come under the power of any. But for God, only that which is holy is good enough for Him. God decides what is and what is not holy. This is the primary thrust of the entire Levitical system of sacrifices. This is also the principle guideline behind the doctrine of biblical separation.

Thus ONLY animals used for worship are included here. Therefore the fat of other clean animals that are good for Israel’s consumption, but not good enough for offering, can be eaten.

When this is applied to the doctrine of worship, there is a BIG difference between what we do for ourselves and with other

worshippers, and what we do between ourselves as worshippers and our God. There are songs that we can sing to our children, boy to girl or husband to wife. The guideline under such circumstances is that it must not be sinful but true, pure, honest, good report and lovely. **Philippians 4:8** says, *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*

But the songs and hymns that Christians sing to praise and worship God have to be spiritual and of a much higher standard. They must not only be not sinful but holy as well. The glory and honour and exaltation of God are key elements in our worship of Him and must not be sentimental like love songs for man.

The penalty for breaking this law is rather severe. The person will be cut off from his people.

- b. **Vs. 26-27** – Blood is not allowed to be eaten. This time it is not limited to only clean animals used for offering but includes all clean animals (including those for worship) that the Jews are allowed to consume.

Blood is life. This was first taught in **Genesis 9:4** which says, *“But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”* This was the first time God gave permission to mankind to eat meat. The guideline was that blood must not be eaten. When God began to use Israel as His national witness (before that it was through home witness whereby the head of the family functioned as mediator or priest), blood was also not allowed to be eaten.

When God transferred the privilege of a visible witness on earth from the nation of Israel to the local church in the NT, the same no eating of blood rule applied. **Acts 15:20**, *“But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”*

Blood was used for the atonement of sins. We are saved by the blood of Christ (see Rom 5:9). It is especially holy unto the LORD. It is therefore not allowed to be consumed by God’s people.

The penalty is the same as before. The soul will be cut off from his people.

The meaning of “cut-off” is varied. In some cases it could mean the death penalty (see Exo 31:14) or in others it could simply mean excommunication (see Numbers 19:13). This word occurs 288 times in 280 verses in the OT.

4. The Priestly Portion of the Peace Offering – 7:28-34

Leviticus 7:28-34, “*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace offerings unto the LORD shall bring his oblation unto the LORD of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. His own hands shall bring the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved for a wave offering before the LORD. And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings. He among the sons of Aaron, that offereth the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part. For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons by a statute for ever from among the children of Israel.”*

- a. Vv 29-30 -- The description of the peace offering from the perspective of the worshipper remains the same. The addition here includes the guidelines for the priest who does the offering. The worshipper brings his own peace offering. There must be no coercion, hence the phrase by “his own hands”. The laying on of hands and confession of sins etc. are not mentioned here but the parts of the offering are. Those parts which are brought before the LORD ONLY include the fat and the breast. But only the breast may be waved for a wave offering. The significance of the wave offering is to let all know that it is consecrated to the LORD and has been given to the LORD as instructed. This is also done willingly. This is to be done in front of the LORD, i.e. not to please man but the LORD.
- b. Vv 31-34 – The priest will burn the fat unto the LORD. But the breast which is for the LORD will be given to the priests. The sequence of the offering is important. The breast and right shoulder are given to the priests AFTER the fat has been burned. Offerings must be offered to the LORD first before the priests can satisfy their own hunger. This sequence was broken by the sons of Eli in 1 Samuel 2:12-17. They took what they wanted first and then gave to the LORD whatever they rejected.

The right shoulder is given to the priest who does the offering whereas the breast is for the rest of the priests to consume.

Why were the breast and right shoulder singled out for the priests? [Note--The rest of the peace offering was to be eaten by the worshipper and his family (see 7:15-18).] The breast was seen as a wave offering (*tenu-phah*) whereas the right shoulder as a heave (*teru-mah*) (see 7:34). The former involved a horizontal side to side action whereas the latter a vertical up and down action. “According

to Jewish traditional exegesis ‘contribution’ (or heaving) was effected by a vertical up-and-down action, whereas ‘dedication’ (waving) was done with a sideways action (Wenham, 126).”

The significance of this is that it was a peace offering which was offered after peace has been received by the worshipper because his sins have been forgiven by the offering of the burnt-offering. The breast was offered to the LORD but not burned. Instead, it was given to the priesthood for their consumption. The right shoulder was given to the priest and the worshipper took the rest of the animal to be consumed by him and his family. Taking the understanding that eating a meal is the closest form of fellowship in the Middle Eastern region, the eating of the breast symbolized the role of the priests as mediators from God’s perspective and the eating of the right shoulder (like our right hand) symbolized the mediatorship of the priest on behalf of the worshipper. The breast was for the priesthood who represented the LORD. The right shoulder was given to the mediator-priest who represented the worshipper. The two actions combined complete the significance of the peace offering.

The breast (meat) represented the heart whereas the right shoulder was likened to the right hand.

This was a practice to be kept forever.

5. A Summary – 7:35-38

Leviticus 7:34-38, *“This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons, out of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister unto the LORD in the priest's office; Which the LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that he anointed them, by a statute for ever throughout their generations. This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings; Which the LORD commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai.”*

Vs. 35-38 – Chapter 7 of Leviticus provides guidelines on the duties of the priesthood and are summarized in verses 35 and 36. Any abuse from wickedness by the priesthood would be easily seen, as in the case of Eli’s sons. The priests were made accountable by these laws in that they could not do whatever they wanted and their priestly duties were regulated.

Not only did the rules regulate the duties of the priesthood, they also ensured that the worshippers understood why the priesthood did certain things and why some parts of the offerings could be eaten and others were not. The duties of the worshipper were also regulated by these laws. Everyone who participated in the offerings, which was the most important

part of Israel's existence, would have no complaints as to what could and could not be offered and eaten and taken home.